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THE

WORKS

Ravaud K. Rodgers

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL, M. A.

LATE RECTOR OF BISLEY, AND VICAR OF CHOBHAM,
SURREY; AND
MINISTER OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD-ROW,
LONDON:

WITH

A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

ARRANGED AND REVISED,

WITH A

VIEW OF THE AUTHOR'S CHARACTER,

BY

JOSIAH PRATT, B.D. F.A.S.

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PREPARED FOR THE PRESS BY MR. CECIL.

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SERMONS

PREPARED FOR THE PRESS

BY

MR. CECIL.

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The True Patriot.

A SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

THE MILITARY ASSOCIATION

OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF

ST. ANDREW, HOLBORN, AND ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR, MIDDLESEX.

AT

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

SUNDAY, JULY 15, 1798.

Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good....2 Sam. x, 12.

TO THE

MEMBERS

OF THE

MILITARY ASSOCIATION OF ST. ANDREW AND ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR.

GENTLEMEN:

YOUR attention to the following Discourse when it was delivered, and your unanimous request to have it printed, induce me, for the first time to publish a Sermon.

I should have felt less difficulty in complying with your request had my discourse been a *written* one; as, in that case, I could have presented you with it in the exact state in which it met your approbation. But having delivered it, according to my usual method, from *notes*, I can now only hope to present it in *substance:* though it has been my endeavour to retain the *expression* also; even to the admitting of repetitions, which would otherwise need an apology.

Some sentiments, however, will doubtless occur to your memories which have escaped mine: and such deficiency I hope to repair by the addition of others contained in my notes, which a fear of detaining you too long on the Sunday obliged me then to omit.

That a divine blessing may attend your exertions,—and that they may soon be rendered unnecessary by a lasting peace, and that happy period be hastened when the *nations shall learn war no more*,—is and shall be the fervent prayer of, gentlemen,

Your most Faithful and Obedient Humble Servant,

RICHARD CECIL.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE TRUE PATRIOT.

1 Sam. xvii, 29.

And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause.

Invited as I am to address my fellow citizens, associated at this important crisis; and much as I must approve their zeal for the public safety, and still more that which leads them to present themselves this morning before God in his House of Prayer; yet I cannot but lament the *Occasion*. To meet every where peaceable citizens in arms! to hear fields and gardens daily echo with the din of martial exercises! Surely this bespeaks a time critical—alarming—new! a time, which a minister cannot but feel, and ought not to neglect. Far from my heart be that frigid indifference, which refuses to take an interest in what affects so many: 'For who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?'

But since, in times like these, it is of high importance first to *settle* our principles of action, and then to *pursue* them with firmness and vigour, I have selected an instance in the text, which, in both these respects, may stand as our example.

Israel had sinned: the scourge of an offended God was now suspended over them; and the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle. On this occasion, an old Israelite had sent three of his eight sons to join Saul and the men of Israel; while the youngest, who had lately gone with his harp to relieve the troubled spirit of the king, was now returned to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

'And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren; and carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge. And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper—and came to the trench, as the host was going forth to fight—and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

Here it was that he contemplated the approaching storm, which threatened to overwhelm his country. Here he saw the battle in array with fierce invaders, preceded by a champion whose stature and prowess were only to be equalled by his pride and blasphemy. He heard no terms proposed but absolute submission and slavery. He saw no face which was not blackened with fear; and, as the terror approached, Israel fled.

A holy indignation rose in the bosom of the young shepherd. A holy flame kindled within him, 'to take away the reproach from Israel.' Yet, considering what an obscure stripling he was, he could only speak by inquiries. 'What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?'

'Jealousy is cruel as the grave; and who can stand before envy? Eliab, his eldest brother, heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thy heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. And David said, WHAT HAVE I NOW DONE? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?'

That this was a *holy* flame which kindled in his

breast, is evident from the *event:* that it was tempered with wisdom, may be gathered from the reply. He would hazard every thing in producing a unity of effort; nothing, that could tend to break it.

"'What have I now done,'" as if he had said. "that should provoke such bitter reflection? What have I now done, that I ought not to have done? If I am come down, is it not in obedience to my father's commands? If, when I came, I felt indignation at the blasphemies which I heard, is there not a cause for indignation? If I even feel and express my desire to withstand the enemies of my country and of my God in their impiety and rage—tell me, WHAT HAVE I NOW DONE? IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

These words of David suggest to us the following general remark for our consideration:—

EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS WARRANT EXTRAORDINARY EXERTIONS; IN WHICH, RIGHTLY TO ENGAGE, DISTINGUISHES THE GOOD CITIZEN AND THE CHRISTIAN.

Here it will be proper for us to inquire,

I. WHAT MAY BE DEEMED SUCH AN OCCASION.

To discuss this question in the abstract, were to trifle with your time: it is sufficient that I can produce such a matter of fact, as one should suppose would make an appeal to every man's bosom. If the present state of things be not such an occasion, he, who resolves to stand still till a greater presents itself, will probably wait till the opportunity for exertion is passed.

Let me ask such an one (if such an one be present) —Had David before him an implacable enemy, making an attack upon the liberty, property, and religion of his country, and threatening it, 'If I prevail, then shall ye be our servants?' A haughty foe, glorying in his strength—defying God and man—and treating with scorn all resistance—spreading terror by his arms, and

horror by his curses and blasphemies?—had David, I say, such an one to meet? and need I attempt to PROVE to you that we are in similar circumstances?

Proofs of facts are impertinent and absurd, while every man is trembling and smarting under their consequences. This congregation can bear witness, that political discussion of every kind is a stranger to this pulpit. It is consecrated to the higher concerns of eternity. 'Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth!' Such strife shall have no consideration here, even on special occasions: nor shall I be intimidated by a term now so often misapplied. But, resolutely as we avoid politics, may we not consider FACTS?—facts, which involve all that is dear?—all that is sacred?

And what facts could I not produce? How closely could I run the parallel, between the enemy of Israel and the enemy of Europe? Did I say, what facts could not *I* produce? What facts could not every one of you produce? 'Who is such a stranger in Jerusalem, that he knoweth not these things?' The principles and practices of our enemy have not only made 'the ears of every one that heareth them to tingle,' but will almost induce posterity to question whether the history of our times be a fact or a romance.

Tell me not *now* what errors, in the high or the low, have accelerated the occasion. Who needs to be told, that a course of sin and error is the history of fallen man?—that, when national sins arise to a certain height (especially under great privileges) national judgments will follow?—and that our errors are part of the punishment of our sins? The state of Israel proved it then, and the state of Europe proves it now; 'for sin is a reproach to any people.' But we are bound, as Citizens and as Christians, wisely to *meet* existing circumstances, as well as to deplore their *causes*. We are bound to regard the danger and the duties of the times in which we live: and we have a bright ex-

ample* before us, in the conduct of David, who while he knew the cause, aimed to repel the effects. If, therefore, citizens now stand forth in arms against a spirit of universal depredation; if ministers now stand up, and are valiant for the truth against a dissolution of all principles, civil and sacred—'What have we now done? Is there not a cause?'

Still some will object.—More easy, indeed, is it to invent invidious objections with Eliab, than to feel a holy indignation with David. It is more easy to stand still, and say, 'Why camest thou hither? I know thy pride,' &c. than to take a sling and a stone, and make what efforts we can against an impending danger. It is still more easy to dart out a scornful and exasperating insinuation, than to meet it, like David, with recollection, and reply in 'words of truth and soberness.'

It has been objected, that war is inconsistent with the spirit of Christianity; and arms still more inconsistent, when found in the hands of private citizens. Wars of ambition or aggrandisement, of caprice or revenge, are certainly opposed to the spirit of Christianity, and 'he that THUS takes the sword,' may expect to 'perish by the sword.' If no other evil attend his undertaking, the very *principle* on which he proceeds is evil. I am ready to declare with a late ingenious writer,† that "If Christian Nations were nations of Christians, all war would be impossible and unknown amongst them."

But this question seems scarcely to come before us on the present occasion. I am now, not even contemplating, much less defending, what I must deplore both as the sin and the scourge of nations. Citizens!

* If any objection arise to this example from what was peculiar in the case of David, let it be considered that the example is adduced only from what is common to him and to every good citizen; namely, his just indignation against an impious oppressor, and his active zeal for the peace and religion of his country.

† Soame Jenyns.

you meditate no violence: you join hands to avert it. You foment no such wars: you recoil at them. War brings nothing before you but danger, and labour, and loss. Why then are you found in arms? I can confidently answer for you, It is merely and entirely to keep *Peace*. It is to defend your King and Country; to perserve Order; to maintain your Liberty, your Property, your Lives, and your Religion. It is, that your families may enjoy quiet at home; that I may, in quiet, meet this attentive congregation on the Sabbath; that we may have a building remain, in which God may be worshipped, and man may be taught the way of salvation. In a word, while outrage is only waiting for an occasion, you are found watching to suppress it.

Who then dwells on *War!* I see nothing before me but officers of the *Peace*:—Volunteers for *Order*:—Citizens banded together for mutual *Defence*; as men who can depend on one another, and as having property and principles to defend. Who speaks of hostility? I hear you saying, "We will oppose it under every pretence. We are sworn enemies to disturbance: and are resolved to bear the toil and cost of making a stand against *invasion*, against *insurrection*, against *plunder*, against *murder*, against *sacrilege*." I hear you saying, "We have seen what has been transacted and is still transacting on the continent; what has reached and has already laid waste part of our Sister Kingdom; what is attempted even in our own—and shall we sit still while mischief is on the wing? Is it any thing but mischief that we aim to resist? Are we not now legally commissioned to resist it? Do not EXTRAORDINARY OCCASIONS WARRANT EXTRAORDINARY EXERTIONS? What then have we done, that we ought not to have done, on the present occasion? Is THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

There certainly is. Were I, indeed, to observe the principle upon which you now proceed, lost in a spirit

of contention; or debased by habits of intemperance, profanation of the Sabbath, or by any other modes of dishonouring that religion which you unite to defend; no one, I trust, would be found more ready to reprobate the conduct or lament the evil: but on the contrary, while your object is rightly pursued, as a Minister of the Gospel of Peace I must be glad of such an union of effort to preserve it. I am glad to see the nation at length roused to a sense of its danger: I hail it as awake; *as wise to foresee the evil*, and active to prevent its approach.

Nor is such precaution and girding of ourselves inconsistent with the purest and most absolute dependance on divine preservation, or any precept of revelation when rightly understood. It is the enthusiast alone, who expects the end, while he neglects the means. ABRAHAM believed God: but, on a proper occasion, 'he armed his trained servants born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen;' and, after recovering his brother, was met on his return and blessed by Melchizedec. JACOB wrestled with God for deliverance from a cruel avenger: but still *planned*, with as much policy as if he had never prayed. DAVID was wise in not *trusting* to his bow: but did he throw it away? He resolved not to trust in chariots or in horses: but did he *destroy* them?

But you are men engaged in business—not more so than NEHEMIAH. He was a man of business, and tells us how he conducted it in the midst of enemies. 'They conspired all of them together,' says he, 'to come and fight against Jerusalem. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night. I even set the people, after their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be ye not afraid of them: remember the Lord which is great and terrible, and fight for your breth-

ren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.' He also tells us, 'that every one, with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he, that sounded the trumpet, was by me.' In this way he could appeal to God, and plead, 'Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.'

I therefore repeat it, it is not the believer, but the enthusiast, who expects the end while he neglects the means. The Apostle, when shipwrecked, was assured that no life should be lost; yet when he saw those men deserting the ship who were proper to secure it, he warned the Centurion, 'Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved.'

It has been objected, "What if, in the event, a man should fall by my hand?" Would to God such a Christian sensibility were more prevalent through Europe! It would stop many a vain-glorious enterprise. It would wrest the sword from many a rash hand, and turn it into a ploughshare.

But that our conscience may be enlightened as well as tender, we should consider, that the same Scriptures which teach us meekness, in that beautiful hyperbole, 'unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other;' teach us also to regard the interests of society, and the governments under which we live —governments appointed of God 'for the punishment of evil doers,' as well as 'for the praise of them that do well.' It ought to be no question with you as Christians, whether you *would* save the invader of your peace; but, it may be a question with you, as citizens legally appointed to maintain it, whether, all things considered, you *can*. We are bound to pray for an enemy; to do him good for evil; and to try to save him, if possible from the pit which he is digging: but the law of love, which seeks his good, must not

be opposed to the law of self-preservation, which prevents his doing evil.

If, then, while you are thus *disposed* and thus *commissioned* to keep the peace, any one should fall in his attempt to break it, How,—let every one ask himself,—how does such a man fall? Verily, as the housebreaker—as the incendiary—as the assassin—as Goliath. Who kills the lawless ruffian? the magistrate that executes the law? the citizen that stands merely upon his own defence? No: the man kills himself. The son of violence as clearly puts himself to death, as a mad dog that rushes upon the opposed spear. 'He digged a pit and fell therein, and his blood is upon his own head.'

God forbid that any one should so mistake me here, as to imagine I would justify on *any* account a single act of violence, that can, all things considered, be prevented! But *all things* must be considered, before we can judge rightly of any *one* thing. I would, therefore, recommend to him, who may hesitate to act on account of the *possible* consequences of present exertions, to extend his views to the very *probable* consequences of making no exertions at all; and to ask, what if the son of violence succeeds? What if no spear is held out as he rushes on? What then? Probably, not one perishes, but thousands—not the guilty, but the innocent.

And is this the way to prevent evil? Look at the blood that has been shed,—not only of men in arms, but of men who have made every sacrifice for peace—men, who have presented their cheek to the smiter! Recollect the blood that has been poured out like water on every side—of helpless Old Age! of Women! of Infants! And after contemplating the massacres and conflagrations on the Continent, look at Ireland in order to ascertain the duty of the times in England! Let any one ask, if such calamities had befallen us as have overwhelmed other nations, what

bitter reflections must, with reason, have seized every heart on the recollection of a torpid supineness—a death-like lethargy—a fatal presumption of 'peace where there was no peace.'

The sluggard, therefore, who is sent to an insect to learn industry, may go again to study self-preservation. Providence, which presents such occasions to man, has given man reason to meet those occasions. You feel this: and, after the example in my text, you are come down, not to provoke, but to prevent a slaughter.

In 'the name of your God' continue thus to 'set up your banners;' and justly may be inscribed upon every one of them, Is THERE NOT A CAUSE?

Having thus attempted to answer the first inquiry under our general proposition, let us now proceed to another no less necessary: namely,

II. WHAT ARE THOSE DISPOSITIONS, WITH WHICH SUCH EXERTIONS SHOULD BE MADE?

This is an important question: for motives and principles determine the character of actions; insomuch, that two men, in performing the same act, may be the one a good, the other an evil agent. Now no man acts with a right disposition, who does not, like David, proceed,

1. With a reference to GOD.

What, in this affair, respects his honour? What, is to be read of his mind, in the signs of the times? If a *controversy* is rending the nations, in which the agents of Hell are to be resisted; yet hath not the Lord also a controversy with Europe? 'The Lord's voice crieth in the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it! Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it!'

And who, that believes his Bible, can wonder at God's controversy with the nations? especially with

Christendom! What provocation can He receive, like that of rejecting or slighting the inestimable gift of his Son? The sentiment, 'This man shall not reign over us,' is the master-sin of Europe. It is propagated by system: it is adopted by fashion: it is even countenanced by moralists: and it is expressed in an infinite variety of ways. But, whether it appear open or disguised, it involves such ingratitude and malignity, that, if it could exist alone, it would sufficiently account for *any* measures of a righteous indignation.

"We will maintain Christianity," says one party. But what Christianity? A solemn farce! in which the *work*, and *word*, and *Spirit* of Christ are made void, and of no effect by your traditions?

"We will have no Christianity," says the other party. "The abuses of Christianity, which we have observed, lead us to determine that it can be of no *use*. We are too good to need any atonement: we are too enlightened to need divine instruction: and, as to spiritual influence, none but knaves or fools so much as consider the subject."

Are these things so? Has this spirit gone forth, not only among the Philistines, but in Israel? No wonder that the 'Lord hath a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways.' He, therefore, is not rightly disposed, who does not humbly bear the rod, mark who hath appointed it, consider *why* it is appointed, and personally depart from iniquity, while he engages himself to oppose its effects.

But a right disposition not only fears, but also TRUSTS the Lord. Contemplating the occasion, it will employ proper means; but on none of them will it *depend*. The language of such a disposition is, "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain—There is no king saved by the multitude of a

host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the Lord.'

Thus went David to meet his enemy: 'Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.' While, therefore, some trust in chariots, and some in horses, we with David should 'remember the name of the Lord our God.'

And, surely, our God has a special claim upon this nation for the remembrance of his name. 'Come and see what desolations He hath made in the earth,' and then contemplate your peace and privileges at home. What has He done for this nation in former times! What, at this day, is He doing for us! I must dismiss the topic—I am overwhelmed with particulars! General recollection, however, is sufficient to remind us to WHOSE almighty and gracious hand we stand indebted for the blessings which we enjoy at this moment, and upon WHOM alone we can depend for their continuance. Such a recollection should teach us, with Asa and Jehoshaphat, to look away from human strength, numbers, arrangements, and exertions; lest folly, weakness, and disappointment should be written on them all. Then, and then only, do we exert ourselves rightly, and advance against invaders with a well-grounded hope of success, when, with the men just mentioned, we own and forsake our sins, trust in promised mercy, and, employing the means put into our hands, cry, with them, 'Help us, O Lord our God—in thy name we go against this multitude—our eyes are upon thee.'

To set up our banners on any other ground, is to fall into the atheism of our enemy. His language, like that of Sennacherib and Goliath, has always been with me a token for good. Notwithstanding his tem-

porary success, we should hold fast this truth, THE LORD REIGNETH. Such an enemy, like the Assyrian, may serve for a time as 'the Rod of God's anger,' which He 'sends against hypocritical nations to take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit HE meaneth not so.' He seems to say, "'Shall I not as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols!' Religion is but superstition, whether in London or in Rome."

But 'shall the axe' thus 'boast itself against Him, that heweth therewith? or the rod shake itself against Him, that lifts it up?' I will take courage while my enemy thus vaunts himself: I tremble when I hear any leader on our side imitate his language.

'Sanctify, therefore, the Lord of Hosts himself; and he shall be for a sanctuary.' The worse the present aspect of affairs, the more need have we to remember the name of the Lord our God. Whoever now frets under difficulties, and thereby increases them; let us recollect ourselves and our only Helper. He alone, who once said to the raging sea, 'Peace, be still,' can now speak peace to the nations. Whenever it comes, HE ought to be acknowledged as the sole giver of it; and, in the mean time, He will keep them 'in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on HIM.'

2. To proceed with a right disposition, we must regard our NEIGHBOUR.

Confining our views here to the occasion, let me remark, that, while the maintenance of peace and order is the single object of this association, UNION is its strength. It may not consist with the health and avocations of every neighbour to join you as a corps. Every neighbour cannot think with you about some particular measures; and some, like Eliab, may be ready to speak *before* they think. Here, brethren, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men.' Study to show yourselves, like the children of Issachar,

'men that have understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do.'

David, in my text, affords us an incomparable example in this respect. "David," says an excellent commentator, "had right and reason on his side: and, therefore, did not render railing for railing; but, with a soft answer, turned away his brother's wrath. This conquest of his own passion, was, in some respects, more honourable than that over Goliath. 'He, that hath rule over his own spirit, is better than the mighty.' It was no time for David to quarrel with his brother, when the Philistines were upon them. The more threatening the Church's enemies are, the more forbearing her friends should be with one another."

In a word, our exertions should be conducted with such wisdom and moderation, benevolence and forbearance, comprehension and energy, that UNION upon the broadest scale may be effected. It is a masterstroke in our enemies, abroad and at home, to damp the efforts which they cannot prevent: to separate you by suspicion—to unhinge you with discord—to discountenance you with ridicule. They will affect to despise, what they really fear. They will attempt to benumb by a panic those endeavours, which they know to be irresistible when in union and in action. And need you to be told the success of such stratagems?

What, then, let me ask, is a right disposition respecting our neighbour, in an association like this? or in such of us as wish to concur with it as our common defence? Evidently, to unite for a just end: to pursue that end with a temper, which while it seeks to disarm the *disturber*, would try if possible to save the *man*: to abstain from even the appearance of injury: and thus, by a variety in our exertions, to produce an unity in effect. Whether, therefore, we are found in arms or not, on the present occasion, let us be one in heart: for, IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?

3. To advance with a right disposition, we must regard OURSELVES.

To be found in the due improvement of those privileges for which we are contending, is essential to our character as Wise Men, as well as Christians. Are we banded for a party? for a humour? Or, on the contrary, is it not to secure privileges of inestimable value, both civil and religious? But, while we are anxious to *secure* them, especially the highest of them,—our religion; should we not be equally anxious to *improve* what we secure? Suppose this House of God, in which we are now assembled, to be assaulted, and the inhabitants, who surround it, to rise in its defence; suppose, after the tumult was over, they paid no regard to the opportunities afforded by it for devotion or instruction; must not the minister say to such,—"For what have ye fought? For the *walls*, or the *worship*, of this Sanctuary? 'Whether is greater, the temple, or He that dwelleth therein?' While ye neglect its services, the temple itself that ye have defended stands a witness against you."

Thus it is with the best and highest of those privileges, for which thousands at this day are ready to contend. Christianity stands as a witness against many of its defenders. How many, in a national struggle, are ready to die for Religion, who yet are spiritually dead to it! How many spurn at a *Decade*, who yet profane the *Sabbath!* How many fathers of a Country and bulwarks of a Church have secured every thing in both, but their own Souls! defended the faith, yet perished in unbelief! opposed Satan one way, yet lived his captives in another! My heart has yearned at marking a great man, wise in his generation, skilfully holding the reins of a vast enterprize, grasping with a mighty mind its various relations, and penetrating with an eagle's eye, into—what!—every thing but HIMSELF—a fallen spirit, in a disordered world! having a day of Salvation, and that neglected!

How natural was the dying language of such an one, when he cried out, "The battle is fought—the battle is fought: but the victory is lost for ever!"

Alas! how many celebrated Geniuses, how many deep Philosophers, how many splendid Conquerors, shall awake in eternity from their vain dreams of glory; each wishing he had been an idiot, or even a brute, that he might never have been eternally a wretch—responsible for talents and privileges neglected and abused!

David is our example in a personal use and improvement of the privileges for which he contended. He felt a holy indignation at the Philistine's profaneness. He fought for the God and worship of Israel: and he also knew how to prize and employ the blessings which he hath won. His 'heart longed, yea fainted for the living God:' he esteemed 'a day in his courts better than a thousand:' he entered into the Sanctuary, to escape the errors of the world; and finding his worst foes to be those which assaulted his heart and dishonoured his God, he sought the disposition which he needed:—'Create,' says he, 'in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me!' Such a disposition to regard our own souls, in the improvement of our present advantages, distinguishes the wise contender. He is prepared, like David, with a reply to every objection. He is armed to meet every terror; even that of the last enemy, who must lay waste the hopes of every other adventurer. He can rest secure of final conquest—not the blaze of a moment, but that Glory, Honour, and Immortality described by the Apostle when he saw 'them that had gotten the victory, standing with the harps of God, and singing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb.'

In concluding, I address you first, as CITIZENS.

The *Cause* in which you are engaged has been shown to be, not only lawful, but laudable. There are times, in which neutrality is a disgrace—in which,

not to oppose is, seemingly at least, to abet. The *Dispositions* also with which you should proceed in such times with respect to GOD, your NEIGHBOUR, and YOURSELVES, have been pointed out. Firmly proceed, therefore, while the occasion calls for your beneficial exertions. To the arms of the different associations, under God, I must ascribe the present tranquility of this country. The good effect of your associating is already strikingly evident: the spirit of tumult is not dead; but has it not shrunk from sight? Is it not awed to silence?

Go on, then, and may the LORD OF HOSTS go with you! may HE give you, who alone *can* give you, right *dispositions* in a right *cause!* Go on,—but I most earnestly beseech you, stop not short in your work. Make not so fatal a mistake, as to think your work done when the present troubles subside. There are enemies, (need I name them?) which if you conquer not, you must sink, after all your exertions and successes, into everlasting shame and contempt. What are other slaughters, compared with those of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil? The thousands, who perish in time by the sword, are lost among the millions who perish everlastingly by sin. Before you go again to the field, 'Go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against God: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhoring to all flesh.'

I have shown the cause which there is for YOUR exertions; and I feel the cause which there is for MINE. The times form a sufficient apology for every effort which a Minister, as well as a Soldier, can make. Look at the strides of insubordination, irreligion, infidelity! But look not only at France; look at Home, where they proceed with an aggravated guilt. What efforts can you or I make to oppose them, which are not warranted by the times? The heartless may con-

temn, and the scornful may provoke; but 'what have we now done? Is THERE NOT A CAUSE?'

There is: a cause, not only for exertion, but for confidence. 'Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!' He has shown us a remedy for this and every other evil. 'He has lifted up an ensign to the nations.' I cannot vouch for the vision of Constantine; but whether *He* saw, or did not see, such an ensign, with its inscription,* as history describes, such an one is ever to be seen by the eye of faith. 'There shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the people: to it shall the Gentiles seek; and His rest shall be glorious.' I can vouch that, to fight under this consecrated banner, is to be more than a conqueror. Though foes surround you, against which your arms, your wisdom, your strength, can avail nothing; happy am I in this opportunity of directing your attention to that Ensign, which God hath lifted up; and under which I earnestly pray that we may live and die, fighting as 'good soldiers of JESUS CHRIST.' It is against THIS, that our enemies abroad and at home have entered into a deep and hellish conspiracy: it is before this, that they are doomed to fall: and it is before this that they must be brought to receive their sentence.

But, with this banner, be YE victorious. Departing from the tents of these wicked men, wisely improve the first of those blessings for which you contend. The Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, is the one, grand, interesting consideration of fallen man. In His strength, 'Fight the good fight of faith: lay hold of eternal life: for HE, THAT OVERCOMETH, SHALL INHERIT ALL THINGS.'

CHRISTIANS, whether in arms or not, you *know* the truths which I speak: you know them *experimentally;* and I trust you do not forget the obligations of Christians in times like the present. Whatever tem-

* Εν τουτω νικα, "With this be victorious."

porary inconvenience you feel from the present contest, I trust you are impressed with a grateful recollection, that, while 'the floods lift up their voice, and the waves are mighty and rage horribly; yet the LORD, who dwelleth on high, is mightier;' and, respecting us, hath said, 'Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, and here shall the proud waves be stayed.'

But let us, as Christians, rejoice with trembling: for Infidels, of late, have employed a new and successful engine. Christians, whom they despaired of moving by their *arguments*, they have enticed to dabble in their *politics;* till in the abounding of iniquity, the love of many has waxed cold. 'Watch ye,' therefore, Christians! 'stand fast in the faith: quit you like men: be strong. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil.'

But a Christian should not only keep his ground in such times, but should advance with an energy and an interest peculiar to himself. If you cannot, with Abraham, arm yourself or your family, you certainly can with him, *intercede*. If you cannot be a leader, like Moses, you can, with him 'lift up your hands' in prayer for the defeat of Amalek. If threatenings mixed with blasphemies are poured out and alarm the nation, you can, with Hezekiah, spread them before HIM, who dwells between the Cherubims. You can stand in the gap: you can run, like Aaron, 'between the living and the dead, till the plague is stayed.'

CHRISTIANS, it is not conceived by others, nor do you sufficiently conceive yourselves, what one steady, resolved, recollected believer, with a public spirit, may effect. The man, who dares to be right—who asks, not what men are pleased to think or say, but what he ought to think and do—who feels this short life to be his only opportunity, for glorifying God on this side of Eternity:—this man is a host. Witness the man, the stripling, I should say, in my text. Such

an one sees the Captain of his Salvation going forth in every tempest which arises, and directing them all. He joins himself to Omnipotence. He fears God, and therefore has none else to fear. He rests in Him, and thus collects fresh strength for his labours. CHRISTIANS, are your loins *thus girded?* Let your 'lights also be burning, and stand like men who wait for their Lord.'

To the CONGREGATION, at large, I now address myself.

The Lord of these servants is coming; and, before him, shall be gathered all nations. But there will not be a single individual among them, who will not *then* feel these truths to be THE GRAND CONCERN OF MAN. Oh may they be accepted with gratitude and joy, *now;* that they may not overwhelm us with unutterable anguish and despair in the presence of the Judge! For, 'behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced Him. Even so. Amen.'

The Sword of the Lord.

A

SERMON

PREACHED ON

THE GENERAL FAST,

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25, 1805,

BEFORE THE

VOLUNTEERS OF ST. ANDREW, HOLBORN.

AND

ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR, MIDDLESEX,

AT

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

When I bring a sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman—If the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned, if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hands....EZEK. XXXIII, 2—6.

TO THE

CONGREGATION

OF

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL.

MY MOST RESPECTED FRIENDS:

THE following Discourse, preached on the late General Fast, would not have been made more public, but at your particular request. The exemplary conduct of the Volunteers, who assembled with us on that Day of Humiliation, could not escape your notice; and their unanimous thanks, communicated to me by their Lieutenant-Colonel, cannot but afford me satisfaction: but your written request, signed by names of such consideration, must have with me the force of a command.

I must, indeed, forget myself, before I can forget the marked attention which you have paid, both to my ministerial labours, and to my personal interests; and I embrace this occasion of expressing my sincere regret, that a long and painful disease has prevented my having a nearer intercourse with you than from the pulpit or the press. Such unavoidable seclusion, however, shall not prevent the exercise of my best efforts and fervent prayers for your welfare; nor my continuing to remain through life,

Your faithful and affectionate Servant,

RICHARD CECIL.

THE SWORD OF THE LORD.

JER. XLVII, 6, 7.

O thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy Scabbard: rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon?

WHEN called to address an Armed Association on a former occasion, I felt it my duty to consider the *lawfulness* and *expediency* of such an Association. I then endeavoured to prove, that if, like David, you had quitted for a time your more peaceful occupations to wield the sword, you were warranted, in present circumstances, to repel any objection by replying with him, "IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?"

I trust the arguments then adduced for the necessity of your recourse to arms, need neither to be repeated nor enforced. The same cause still exists: and that, with accumulated aggravation: and I must add, that you have a claim both upon the *gratitude* and upon the *assistance* of your fellow-citizens, in this laudable effort.

The present occasion, however, of our assembling, is that of humbling ourselves before God on a National Fast. Such an occasion is very distinct from the former. On the former, we might, with propriety, discuss the measure of employing the sword as a necessary *expedient:* but, on a day like this, we are naturally led to deplore it as a *judgment;* to tremble before Omnipotence in arms; and to remember that the Almighty has expressly described War as one of his "four sore judgments:" Ezek. xiv. 21.

While, therefore, as rational creatures, we adopt the means of security which the times so imperiously demand, let me call your attention, on a day of appointed humiliation, to some general reflections on 'The Sword of the Lord.'

In this passage of Scripture, we have a prophetical denunciation of Jeremiah 'against the Philistines, before Pharaoh smote Gaza.' The prophet foretels an appointed invasion, shortly to overwhelm a nation which added to its other crimes a bitter enmity to Israel. He then describes some of its dreadful effects; but, recoiling at the horrors which he foresaw, he seems to shrink from his own message, and thus utters the feelings of his heart:—'O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard: rest, and be still.' Recollecting, however, that it was the 'sword of the LORD,' and that it had a special commission to execute his righteous judgment, he adds, 'How can it be quiet, seeing the Lord hath given it a charge against Ashkelon?'

In speaking to you on this subject, I shall contemplate the 'Sword of the Lord' as A SORE JUDGMENT—AN APPOINTED AVENGER—and A SOLEMN MONITOR.

I. A SORE JUDGMENT.

In a single division of this discourse, I can but glance at the dispensation; yet I cannot but help stopping to mark the illusion that is over our minds, while distant from the actual seat of war. We coolly demonstrate its necessity: we sit at ease and in plenty: hearing only its rumours: the sound of its thunder, because *distant*, loses its terror. The Ambitious, on a victory, swell at the idea of national aggrandizement: the Politician reclines by his fire, drinks his wine, and feels somewhat *disappointed*, if his paper brings no account of a hard fought battle: the Idle wander to a review, and are entertained with the glit-

ter of arms, the melody of martial music, and "all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war;" but how little do they reflect to what unutterable woe such preparation tends! like infants, who admire the polish and workmanship of their father's sword; but consider not that it is *formed* to be a weapon of death, and *drawn* to be bathed in blood.

But, while the unthinking amuse themselves with the splendid apparatus of war, and more solid minds sadly ruminate on its dreadful necessity, every good man must deplore its inevitable consequences. To say nothing of the scarcity of provisions, which it may occasion; the demand upon property; the sweeping away the flower of the youth and strength of a nation, and appointing them like so many sheep for the slaughter—to say nothing of the miseries attending war from fatigue, famine, contagion, dangers, and mortal diseases, as well as from the sword—not to mention the grey hairs of parents brought in sorrow to the grave; nor the deeper sorrows of bereaved widows and their fatherless children: I say, passing by these—I would call your attention, as members of the Christian Church, to the consideration of the vast multitudes of your fellow creatures plunged at a stroke into eternity; and plunged at a moment, when the spirit of war has roused their minds to violence and revenge little short of fury.

Let none mistake me here, as if I meant to reflect on the profession or heart of a soldier, as such.

He may be, and he often is, a man of the most humane and generous feelings: and such an one will be found weeping over the miseries, which he must, as a soldier, inflict. A soldier, who, like the brave Col. Gardiner, unites piety and humanity with the most determined courage, stands among the first of human characters. It must be evident, therefore, that I am speaking, not of the defect of the *man*, but of *the na-*

ture and tendency of WAR, and of its ordinary effects as a sore judgment.

But the appearance of Armed Citizens naturally calls my recollection to that part of war, which is attended with accumulated horrors: I speak of INVASION. It is this destination of the sword, that the present prophecy particularly regards. 'Before Pharaoh,' the Invader, 'smote Gaza,' the prophet predicts that 'waters,' the prophetical figure for a great multitude, 'should rise up out of the north'—that 'an overflowing flood should overflow the land and all that was therein'—that 'the inhabitants of it should howl at the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots,' and 'at the rumbling of his wheels;' and such should be the general consternation of that day, that even 'fathers should not look back to their children for feebleness of hands'—You, who are parents, will feel, with me, that a stronger image than this could not be used, to express terror in the extreme.

If the most ordinary conception did not exceed any description, it would be sufficient to recollect facts, even of our *own* times, respecting a country, subjugated by war. The Scriptures describe almost literally—'the field wasted—the land mourning—the inhabitants trembling—a fire devouring before the enemy, and behind them a flame burning—the land, as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness—all hands fainting, and every man's heart melting: pangs taking hold of them as a woman that travaileth—they stand amazed at one another'—Well, therefore, may this be called 'the day of the Lord's anger; great, and very terrible: and who can abide it?'

But, would to God, this were the *worst* that could be said of the sore judgment which we now consider! There is something yet worse than the plunder of the ruffian—than the outrage of the ravisher—than the

stab of the murderer. These are, comparatively, but the momentary evils of war. There is, also, (as all history, as well as that of our own times, will show,) a shocking *moral* appendage which naturally grows out of national conflict, though it may be occasionally restrained. For, instead of listening to the counsels of divine mercy, and concurring in the design of a Kingdom of Heaven set up on earth in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost;' the spirit of warlike discord tends to intomb every such idea. It rather tends to set up something like a kingdom of Hell—a reign of violence, where destruction is the grand enterprise; where the means of death and desolation are cultivated as a science; where invention is racked to produce ruin, and the performance of it is ennobled by public applause. Moloch seems once more enthroned: while ambition, revenge, and oppression erect their banners amidst groans and tears; amidst cities desolated or smoking in their ashes.

If, therefore, we contemplate this sore judgment in a *moral* view, it appears to be an incomparably greater calamity than either pestilence or famine. I must, therefore, repeat the distinction already made, that, however lawful and necessary the recourse to arms may be in times like ours, yet such is WAR: and such it appears, my Fellow Citizens, *you* have considered it in thus forming yourselves into a band to prevent its ravages. What is all the military toil, expense, and preparation, which I see, but your efforts to *prevent* what I describe and deplore? If *you* take arms, it is only to preserve *peace*. If *you* draw the the sword, it is that the sword of an aggressor may be returned to its scabbard. *You* do but arrest the hand, which seizes a weapon; and from what I now advance, you will, I trust, be more ready to arrest it. We, therefore, perfectly agree in design; and may God accept, this day, our joint endeavours!

But, to pursue our subject. We shall find this day

of vengeance darken as we proceed in the examination, since it tends to eclipse the only ray of hope sent to cheer a perishing sinner. Its storms roughen his path to a better country, and deprive him of his appointed supports in the way.—Ah! heavenly RELIGION, holy, humble, benevolent, travelling to a city wherein dwelleth righteousness, where shall rest be found for the sole of thy foot whilst war is ravaging the earth?—True Religion, like her Prophet, is 'very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts;' but the sons of violence 'despise his covenant, throw down his altars, and slay his prophets with the sword:' in the mean time, she wanders a stranger; listening, after the 'earthquake and the fire,' to 'a still small voice, Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.' Let *us* thus listen, my Fellow Worshippers, in this House of Prayer, till the sword is returned to its scabbard; remembering, at the *worst* that it is a sword in the hand of our Father.

You will say, "This view of the sword is horrible, in the extreme; though such extreme cases do not always occur."

I must beg your attention, while I correct this sentiment; and prove, that the sore judgment of War has not yet been shown in the *extreme*.

The Prophet looked far beyond the hand of man when he exclaimed, 'O thou sword of the Lord when wilt thou be quiet?' In the hand of man, however ambitious and cruel, the sword may sometimes be resisted. Caprice or interest may sheath the sword of a tyrant: a moment may sink him, like Pharaoh, 'as lead in the mighty waters:' a moment may cast his carcase, like Belshazzar's, on a dunghill: or make him, like *Herod*, a monument of human pride and weakness. There was no need of an army, in his case, to prove the distinction between the sword of

man, and the sword of the *Lord:* a few worms, in as few moments, did the work.

We have not considered this calamity in the *extreme*, till we view it as mingled with the righteous wrath of an offended God: and, when HE arises in judgment, 'who can stay HIS hand, or say unto him what doest THOU?' Hear his own declaration—'See now that I, even I, am he: I kill, and I make alive: I wound, and I heal: neither is there any, that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.'

Beholding such an adversary on his way, well might the Prophet exclaim. 'O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard: rest, and be still.' Yet 'how can it be quiet?' since the text leads us to consider it as,

II. AN APPOINTED AVENGER.

Scripture teaches us, that the *sword* is but a messenger; proceeding with a special commission to plead the cause of him, who hath appointed it. It was, therefore, that the Prophet seems like one under recollection, after expressing his compassionate expostulation. As if he had said, "I have been calling on the sword to rest and be still, but 'how can it be quiet?' It is on its way to stop a Rebellion, which still rages, and lifts up its face against the Most High. The sword, with which I now expostulate, does but execute its office. The Lord 'hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the Sea-shore: THERE, THERE, hath he appointed it.'"

When we hear the MOST HIGH saying concerning guilty nation, 'If I bring a sword upon that land. nd say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off

man and beast,' he immediately informs us, that this sword, whatever may be the evil motive of the man that wields it, is as much executing an express charge of Heaven, as any one of his other sore judgments. famine or pestilence.

But the veil that is on the heart of man prevents his regarding any thing but the visible *machinery* of war. Like the young man who attended upon Elisha, he sees, with trembling, the horses and chariots of *men;* but nothing of that arm of Omnipotence, stretched out in battle array, which the prophet saw. Man stops at the *effect:* God calls him to regard the *cause.* A sword is as harmless, in itself, as a ploughshare; but when grasped in anger, it assumes an aspect of terror. God, however, teaches us, that the man himself, who grasps it, is but a sword in his own hand, permitted or appointed. 'Arise, O Lord,' says the Psalmist, 'disappoint him: cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is THY sword; from men, which are THY hand.'

This short-sightedness leads to the great swelling words of vanity, found in the mouths of little perishing insects of a day. We are taught from childhood to admire that presumption in a storm, which vaunted to an affrighted mariner, "Fear not: you carry Cæsar!" But who was Cæsar? verily, but a feeble worm, sent to execute his Maker's commission but a few days before that, in which he himself was trodden under foot *as* a worm. Who was that Royal Desperado, that, in despite of God's warning, would madly go up to battle? only a *single* bow was drawn, and that at a *venture;* yet the Lord made even a solitary arrow his appointed avenger, and gave it a charge to find its way to the heart of Ahab through the joints of his harness. Who was that Tyrant, that proudly thought his sword had no other commission than what he himself gave it? 'Shall I not,' says he, 'do to Jerusalem, as I have done to Samaria?" No! you shall not: you

have no such commission. 'Therefore the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn.' But, 'Thus saith the Lord, because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore I will put my hook in thy nose and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.' And who, let me ask, is that *other* Tyrant, for whom the same *hook* and *bridle* are reserved? He, who is now trampling on the liberties, property, and lives of Europe? verily, *nothing* in himself—*every thing* that is dreadful, while permitted to act as a sword.

However, therefore, you may abhor the ambition, the cruelty, the falsehood, the rapacity of such a destroyer; and, as the common friends of mankind, resolutely withstand *his* designs—still, still, I earnestly entreat you, consider what is necessary to this end. 'Run, not as uncertainly. Fight, not as one that beateth the air.' Stand to your arms, but take firm hold of THAT HAND, which holds the sword, and which alone can return it into its scabbard. In the mean time, let us recollect, with a holy fear, that it has long had a charge against Europe; that it is still *drawn;* and that it is nothing short of Atheism, to look at our national resources, or at our *rampart the sea*, and say, "*It cannot come hither!*" The inquiry should be, Whose sword is it? Who appoints it? And who can resist it when thus appointed, whether it be against Ashkelon or England?

And 'how can it be quiet,' whenever the Lord appoints it to plead his cause? a cause, big with reasons far beyond the ken of a mere politician.

"It continues to ravage the earth," says one, "because the ambition and rapacity of one man is insatiable." Admitted. But what (as I have just shown) did an inspired writer say of such men? 'Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is THY sword.'

"It continues," says another, "because the Sove-

reigns of Europe are impolitic dastards: they consider not their own interest." Suppose *this*, too, admitted: who hath threatened 'to pour a spirit of deep sleep on Rulers,' and 'to destroy the counsel of Princes?'

"It continues," says a third, "because a capital error was committed in a former negociation: the single opportunity of peace was lost." Were this also admitted, it should suffice to recollect, who it was that *permitted* this error, and who can now *recall* it.

"It continues," says a fourth, "from *necessity*. The present state of Europe can admit of nothing more than an armed peace." Admitted, again! But who made this necessity? This very necessity is 'the sword of the Lord:' it is but the appointed avenger. *How*, then, *can it be quiet?*

But does *Europe* need *particular* and *doubtful* reasons, in order to account for its convulsed state?

It is, in fact, but wretched *trifling*, to call in the feeble conjectures of Politicians, in order to account for the appointment of a sword to go through our modern Ashkelon,—EUROPE. Such opinions, even when *just*, look only to MEANS, but stop infinitely short of the cause. But it is the CAUSE, which the word of God is repeatedly bringing forward; and which the blind, unbelieving heart of man is continually forgetting. The sword has long been drawn, and (to pass by now any enumeration of transgressions common, perhaps, to Ashkelon and to Europe) *how can it be quiet*, while Infidelity has been taking gigantic strides, unknown, till of late, in Christendom? How *can it be quiet*, when, even among *us*, opposition and contempt are daily harassing the few remaining friends of truth, in their endeavours to abolish that abominable traffic the Slave Trade abroad, or to suppress the grosser vices and open profanations at home? Do the 'wicked so walk on every side, as to put to rebuke' every effort of virtue? Are we grown such admirers of our old

inveterate enemies the French, that, if we do not actually abolish the Sabbath *in name*, we resolve to destroy the *thing*, by our Sunday Entertainments, Sunday Travelling, Sunday Concerts,—by business or by pleasure on that holy day? *How can it be quiet*, if, while that old stupendous idol of a blind superstition, Popery, is tottering on its basis, and while its visible head is become the contemptible tail of a bold usurpation, we, whether Churchmen or Dissenters, attempt to set it up under another *form*, and call it *Christianity?* For, let me ask, what is heartless religion, whether among Papists or Protestants, but a dead image of a living thing? And what is our dead image better than that which our fathers abandoned at the Reformation?—an image, scarcely having a *form* of godliness; but utterly denying, yea sometimes opposing, the *power* thereof—an image, no more that religion which Christ came to set up in the world, than the image of David which Michal laid on the pillow of goat's hair, was the David who had fled.

Brethren, this is neither a time nor occasion for temporizing concealments; nor shall I consider, for a moment, what the advocates for a barren and lifeless profession of religion may object to these remonstrances. My answer is *ready*, and it is *short*—'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.' The enemies of vital religion dare to be loud in their opposition; and are we, the Ministers of Christ and Stewards of his mysteries, to shrink in such a cause? No: rather let us descend to the *root* of this evil: let us examine whether there be not some MASTER-SIN, from which present evils may be traced; and thereby account for an express charge given to the sword—that sword, which has desolated Europe, and long threatened this country.

But, a word respecting this Master-Sin.

I see grave men alarmed; and hear them complain-

ing of the ungodliness of the times. They lament that the fruits of righteousness among us are as the 'shaking of an olive tree: two or three berries on an uppermost bough.' But they seem not sufficiently to consider that these 'fruits of righteousness' can only be derived from a union by faith with JESUS CHRIST, and thus tend 'to the glory and praise of God.' 'I am the vine,' says Christ: 'abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me'—for, 'without me, ye can do nothing.' No man, who calls himself a Christian, can be supposed to deny this statement of our Master: and will any such man wonder why so little of the *fruits of righteousness* are found among us? Can he see this infinite condescension of 'God manifest in the flesh'—*this* source of all spiritual life, grace, and love—I say, can he see this scarcely noticed in the *Nation*, in the *Senate*, in the *Courts*, in the *Camp*, in the *Schools*—I had almost said in the *Pulpit*, and then gravely inquire for 'fruits of righteousness?' or cease to tremble before the 'sword of the Lord' in its appointment against Christendom? Rather, will he not say, "While these things ARE,—*how can it be quiet.*"

But let us, Brethren, enter into the design of Holy Scripture, in recording those judgments which have fallen on other nations, and regard the 'sword of the Lord' as,

III. A SOLEMN MONITOR.

When the Lord appoints the sword to avenge his cause in other nations, he speaks to those on whom it has not yet fallen. He generally speaks, *before* he strikes; but he always speaks, in striking. "Even Ehud's poinard," says the pious Bishop Hall, "was God's message: not only the vocal admonitions, but also the real judgments of God, are his errands to the world." He seems to repeat, in such events, "'Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at

my presence?' Will ye not gather, from every stroke of my righteous judgments on others, what sentiments ye yourselves should cultivate till this sword be returned into its scabbard?"

And what *are* those sentiments, which we should cultivate in present circumstances?

Not those of the *Vindictive*, who, like enraged tigers, furiously bite the spear which they cannot avoid; who scorn to treat; who pant for what *they* term a proud day for England, whatever it costs. 'Scatter,' says the Psalmist, 'the people who delight in war.' But when, like some nobler minds on record, the soldier would save and succour, where he is not obliged to destroy; he appears, indeed, an angel of *vengeance*, but, *yet*, an ANGEL.

Not those of the *Presumptuous*, who say, "Let him come. We wish the attempt to be made. The result will be glorious to our arms." Have these men *quite* forgot, that there is a God, and that war is his *Sword?* Let us, my dear hearers, learn our entire dependence on the God of Battles: and tremble when *He* takes the sword, though the worst tyrant that ever breathed on earth executes the commission—whether a Nebuchadnezzar, or a Sennacherib; a Tippoo Saib, or a Buonaparte.

Not those of the *Restless*, whom no men, no measures can long please: who can cavil and embarrass, but not assist, even with a finger, the common effort. A man of this description will find fault every where, except where it is most to be found,—in himself.

Least of all should we cultivate the sentiments of the *Negligent;* men, who will supinely look on, while the Invader confiscates their property; annihilates their rights, civil and sacred; violates the chastity of their family; and puts a knife to their throat. What! are these men more irrational than brutes, who know the use of their horns and hoofs? The secret purposes of God should never be confounded with the rela-

tive duties of life. As a wise and good Prince may employ the basest of his subjects for his *executioner;* so we learn, both from Scripture and from Fact, that God often employs the worst of men to execute his judgments. But, while He is executing them, he calls us, as his rational creatures, to employ such measures of security as he hath enabled us to use: and it is only in a vigorous prosecution of them, that we can warrantably hope for success, or comfortably meet the reverse. To trust God without the use of means, is to tempt him: to use means without dependence on God, is to despise him. *Duty* is ours: *Events* are God's. Nor can *Religion* be brought forward in vindication of any such supineness: as I considered more at large on a former occasion.

Instead, therefore, of a sluggish or presumptuous neglect of those means of defence which Providence has put into our hands, let us imitate the wise conduct of Jacob, in contriving the most effectual methods for disarming his malignant brother. Let us learn of Joshua, to use *every* measure which sound policy and determined courage dictate for counteracting the designs of the common enemy. Let us stand, like Nehemiah, armed for *war*, as well as diligent in our proper callings; and having, like him, thus 'played the man for our people, and for the cities of our God, let the Lord do that which seemeth Him good.'

The Volunteer System, so numerous in its members, and so determined in its object, is a splendid monument in English History. Such a union of zeal and unanimity one cannot but hope comes from God, as a 'token for good.' A still stronger token for good is, the zeal which has been kindled in the hearts of many for the support and propagation of the Gospel. But the best warranted hope is, from that Spirit of Prayer which has long been stirred up in the breasts of real Christians, of all denominations, for the safety of the nation. We should be thankful that we can mark

such 'tokens for good,' in times like these. The record of Nineveh's deliverance should ever be present to our minds on a Public Fast; and should prevent despondency, even while the most Solemn Monitor is speaking.

Nor ought I to pass by the good example which the Volunteers before me have set, in having never blotted their profession, no, not in a single instance, by profaning the Sabbath in the exercise of their arms. Strange infatuation, indeed, in those who could concert or employ such a measure for safety! What! will men pray to God for success in their undertakings, on the very day in which they mean to break his *commands*? They hear their Minister proclaim, on divine authority, 'Remember that thou keep Holy the Sabbath Day:' "Lord have mercy upon us," they reply, "and incline our hearts to keep this law." Keep this law! what, by the exercise of arms—by disturbance—by dissipation—by gathering together and amusing an immense number of idle spectators? Shall we hope to defend our nation, by imitating the profaneness of our enemies; and that under a dispensation of light which *they* never enjoyed?

The man of piety will not only listen himself to the Solemn Monitor, which speaks so loudly to Europe at this day; but will also join the Prophet, in his pathetic exclamation, 'My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at the heart; for thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet and the alarm of war.' The very next reflection, however which will arise in his mind, will be this—"Oh that my country also could hear the voice of *God* in this war! and seriously inquire, 'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me—Oh that it knew, at least in this day of its visitation, the things that belong to its peace!'—a day, when not only a drawn sword hangs over it, but a raging pestilence also threatens its shores, and has occasioned its government to call in the aid of medi-

cal science, and bid it stand on the watch for our national security. Oh," says he, "that it knew, at least in this its day, how much it lacks that ONE thing so essentially needful, a spirit of true and vital RELIGION! This would give an ear to the *Admonition*. This would put *meaning* into its Fasts. This would give true confidence to its arms, and afford it security against every Invader."

Such, indeed, *must* be the natural reflection of every pious man. And, true it *is*, that a spirit of *real* religion would teach us, with Abraham, to intercede on this fast, even for our hostile neighbours. It would lead us, with Daniel, to humble ourselves before the Most High; and to cry, 'O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of face.' It would instruct us, like David, when he saw the destroying angel stretch a drawn sword over Jerusalem, to fall on our faces, confess our sins, and call for mercy. It would incline us, with Jeremiah, to pity and thus to instruct, even the despisers of our giving glory this day to the Most High; 'Hear ye, and give ear: be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory unto the Lord your God, before he cause darkness—But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride.'

A pious man, impressed with the warning of this Solemn Monitor, will naturally, in his retirements, ruminate on his ultimate resource, under all possible consequences. He may picture to himself the rising up, at an unexpected moment, of an invading army; rushing on, like a mighty torrent that has broken down its banks, and overwhelms the adjacent country: he sees every effort made by the distracted inhabitants, to repel its violence, or to flee from its approaches. But, in such an extremity as this, will any thing present itself to his mind, but the utter *weakness* of man, and the almighty power of *God?* Oh the strong consolation, at such a moment of that voice, 'When thou

passest through the waters I will be with thee!"—Brethren, such an extremity has visited nations around us: such an extremity may visit *us*. May we be prepared *thus* to meet it!

We are admonished: but do we lay to heart this warning voice? As a man, who is overtaken with his neighbour in a storm, and, seeing him fall by a stroke of lightning, walks on with trembling lest the next flash should be directed to himself: so should we be found walking on the day of national humiliation, before the Lord of Hosts.

Fellow Citizens, and Fellow Sinners! if I have wearied your patience by the length of my discourse, impute it to my zeal as your *Minister*, and to my affection as your *Brother*. And as any particular Application of it is precluded by such enlargement, let it suffice to recollect its general aim:—TO ADVANCE AND ENFORCE THE UNIVERSAL DOMINION OF HIM, WITHOUT WHOM EVEN A SPARROW FALLS NOT TO THE GROUND; AND TO POINT OUT THAT STATE OF MIND, IN WHICH WE SHOULD STAND BEFORE HIM ON THE PRESENT OCCASION.

In a day of atheistical rebuke and blasphemy, like the present, you will doubtless meet with some, who will despise such considerations. What serious truth will not ignorance, joined with vice, despise? You may properly, however, inform them, that ENGLAND was once lost to an invader; and you will do well to bid them mark the *circumstances* in which it was lost. "The *English*," says Rapin, "*spent the whole night in carousing and singing, as if they were* SURE *of victory. The Normans, on the contrary, were employed in preparing for the battle, and offering up prayers to God for success.*" You know *the event:* and you know who hath said, 'Them that honour me I will honour.'

And now 'I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.' that my feeble labours this

day for your welfare may not be in vain. We shall certainly meet together once more; but probably not till THAT day, when these truths will admit of no doubt. In the mean time, the grave will mingle the dust of Ministers and Soldiers; and that both may enter it, having first obtained a complete victory over it, may God of his infinite mercy grant, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Church Missionary Society.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE AND ST. ANNE BLACKFRIARS,

On Tuesday, in Whitsun Week, May 31, 1803.

BEFORE THE

SOCIETY FOR MISSIONS TO AFRICA AND THE EAST.

INSTITUTED BY

MEMBERS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

BEING THEIR

THIRD ANNIVERSARY.

A

SERMON,

&c.

ISAIAH, XL, 3.

Prepare ye the Way of the Lord.

WE meet this day, as Members of the Church of England, to promote a design of evangelizing the Heathen; and sure I am, every true Member of Christ must be a hearty well-wisher to such a design. Whatever objection he may make to the manner in which it is taken up by us, or by any other body of Christians, still he must, from the bottom of his heart, adopt the language which we have been using this day in our service. 'God be merciful unto us and bless us, and show us the light of his countenance; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations:' Ps. lxvii, 1, 2.

This Prophet, who speaks so expressly of that light that was about to arise on the Gentiles, here predicts another herald who should 'go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way.' It appears from the terms employed in this and the following verses, that an evident allusion is made to a custom which still obtains in some parts of the East; where, on the approach of an illustrious Personage, his way is prepared before him by levelling mountains, by filling up valleys, and by removing obstructions of every kind.

'Prepare ye,' therefore, cries the Prophet, 'the

way of the Lord;' or, as he elsewhere expresses it. 'cast up, cast up the highway:' gather out the stones: lift up a standard for the people:' Isa. lxii, 10, and. for the encouragement of all those who shall be called to 'prepare this way' to the end of time, it is subjoined to the text, 'Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it'—"ALL FLESH," cries he, 'shall see it'—for it shall be revealed to the Jew first. and also to the Gentile.

Omitting such a general discussion of the text in its connection as might be proper on another occasion, I shall confine myself now to the special purpose of our assembling, namely, that of preparing the way of the Lord among the Heathen; and, accordingly. shall make a few remarks on their MORAL STATE—the MEANS OF THEIR RECOVERY—and the MOTIVES TO ATTEMPT IT.

Let us glance at that affecting fact.

I. THE MORAL STATE OF THE HEATHEN.

The field is so wide, that I shall not even attempt to give any thing like a comprehensive view: a single division in a sermon would not admit of this. A few facts, however, may suffice: because, from them, the general state may easily be inferred; and because select features strike the mind more forcibly than general descriptions.

But, in order to make a just estimation of the horrid *chamber of imagery* before us, we must proceed with the lamp of Revelation in our hand. It is by this infallible light, that the 'dark places of the earth full of cruelty,' Psalm lxxiv, 20, are rightly apprehended. Yet, as we enter into and explore the

shades, we are confounded at the facts which present themselves.

For, surely, it must astonish the enlightened eye of a moral traveller, to observe, that, if some nations of the Heathen have made considerable advances in civilization and science, yet that their knowledge of the character of God, and of their moral wants and resources, has been but gross ignorance—that their ablest guides, 'professing themselves to be wise became fools,' Rom. i, 22—that their very Gods were scandalous; their worship ridiculous, cruel, and impure; and their morals abominable.

But, in taking a wider survey of the Heathen World, though such a traveller may be less surprised at finding the Sun and other celestial Luminaries the grand objects of heathen idolatry, yet how must he be shocked at beholding millions of rational creatures prostrating themselves before an Ox, a Crocodile, a Serpent, a Dog, an Ape, or some monstrous assemblage of their several forms? yea, before Vermin, before Vegetables,* and ten thousand other fantastic representations of Deity!

Nor are the objects of Idolatry more shocking than its *Rites*. "The Religion of the Heathen in this vast territory," writes a faithful and intelligent witness still living among them, "consists of little more than Lust and Cruelty."

With respect to the former of these, were I to attempt to give a particular description of the impure attributes and symbols of Pagan Deities, of the troops of prostitutes which form a part of their establishments, and of the various abominable means by which millions are held fast in their idolatrous bonds, such a description would be evidently improper, and even dangerous. Such scenes are best described by the Apostle, when he says, 'It is a shame even to speak

* O sanctas gentes, quibus hæc nascuntur in hortis Numina!
Juvenal, Sat. 15.

of those things which are done of them in secret:' Eph. v, 12.

But, if we advert to the Cruelty which idolatry mingles with its devotions, what less than a superstition worthy of Hell still keeps tribes of wretches fixed through life in tormenting attitudes, crawling under intolerable burdens, burning their scalps, piercing their flesh with hooks, like those of old, who 'leaped on their altars,' and cut themselves with knives,' crying 'O Baal, hear us!' 1 Kings xviii, 26. Above all, what but the most diabolical infatuation could urge the Heathen to multiply human sacrifices, and bring even their innocent offspring for a burnt-offering to such a Deity as Moloch! and which murders them in incredible numbers unto this day.*

But, if the *Theology* of the Heathen be so gross, what can be expected from their Morality? Even where little more of Christianity is found than the name, yet so has it raised the standard of morals,† that pagan licentiousness is found intolerable in Christendom. Take a late instance of this in the conduct of our neighbours, the French. This people, after making the boldest experiment in profaneness ever made by a nation, in casting off its God; and who, for a time, seriously deliberated whether there should be any God at all; who, after madly stamping on the yoke of Christ, attempted to establish order on the basis of a wild and profligate philosophy—yet even *this* nation was at length obliged to bid an orator tell the abused multitude, that, under a philosophical religion, every social bond was broken in pieces; and that Christianity, or something like it, must be re-established to preserve any degree of order or decency.

And here let me remind *Females*, how much they

* A more particular account of such superstitions was intended here, but, for the sake of brevity, the reader must be referred to note A at the conclusion.

† See note B.

owe in society to the diffusion of gospel light; and let me thereby attempt to stimulate *them*, to employ their influence in diffusing its healing beams.

Could you behold the cruel slavery and degradation of your sex in Heathen nations, I should scarcely need any other argument with *you*.

When a Missionary, in South America, was reproving a married woman of good character for following the custom of destroying female infants, she answered with tears, "I wish to God, Father, I wish to God, that my mother had by my death prevented the distresses which I endure, and have yet to endure as long as I live. Consider, Father, our deplorable condition. Our husbands go to hunt, and trouble themselves no further. We are dragged along, with one infant at the breast, and another in a basket. They return, in the evening, without any burden: we return, with the burden of our children; and, though tired with a long march, are not permitted to sleep; but must labour the whole night, in grinding maize to make chica for them. They get drunk; and, in their drunkenness, beat us; draw us by the hair of the head, and tread us under foot. And what have we to comfort us for slavery that has no end? A young wife is brought in upon us, who is permitted to abuse us and our children because we are no longer regarded. Can human nature endure such tyranny? What kindness can we show to our female children, equal to that of relieving them from such oppression, more bitter a thousand times than death? I say again, would to God that my mother had put *me* under ground the moment I was born!"

Observe, this was not a peculiar case, but a national custom. Ah! how remote from that recommended by the benevolent and sympathizing genius of that Gospel, which we would introduce among them!

Look again at another national custom, which, to this day, brings a widow, after having just closed the

eyes of her husband, to be burnt to ashes at his side: —30,000 say some, 50,000 say others, of such victims perish annually in the East Indies.

You may, perhaps, be willing to hope that the moral state of the Heathen, indicated by these features, must be confined to a few remote parts of the earth. Alas! it is comparatively but a small part of the earth, where, in a greater or less degree, such superstition does not still prevail. Mahometanism has, indeed, removed some of its grosser features; but what has this imposture introduced in their place?

Infidels, perhaps, have told you that the moral virtues, at least, may be found in some parts of the world, where the Christian Faith is unknown: but representations of this kind have been proved, again and again, to be absolute falsehoods: and even allowing that any degree of truth attaches to such accounts, nothing more is to be inferred than that 'the strong man' uses specious methods 'to keep his goods in peace:' Luke xi, 21. The affected solemnity of one lunatic as fully discovers his actual condition, as the extravagant pranks of his fellow.

But, still, you may be ready to ask, "Has not even Christianity itself exhibited scenes, at which humanity shudders?" I answer, No: in no instance. Christianity is one thing: Popery, another. Christianity must no more be made answerable for its counterfeits, that its emblem Gold. It is one of the arts of Hell to confound truth with hypocrisy. Real Christianity is that wisdom from above, which, is 'first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy:' James iii, 17. But if, under this holy name, a bold Harlot comes forward in heathen attire, affecting the pomp, secularity, tyranny, and idolatry of Pagan Superstition, what wonder, if she adopts its *cruelty* also!

Let God, however, *be true: and every man*, oppo-

sing his declarations, *a liar*. He has described, by existing facts and by every figure of speech, the blindness, depravity, and helplessness of fallen nature in the Gentile World: and, were it not that we are apt to read accounts till we forget their meaning, I need only to read the first Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to show more fully the moral state of the Heathen. He, who cannot deceive or be deceived, hath assured us, that the darkness of the Heathen is so connected with wickedness, that, besides those crimes,* for which it is said 'the land itself vomited out her inhabitants,' it is added, 'Every abomination to the Lord which he hateth have they done: for even their sons and their daughters they burnt in the fire to their Gods:' Deut. xii, 3.

Add to these more conspicuous instances, the innumerable tribes which rove the vast deserts of Asia, Africa, and America—millions, who scarcely ever rise to an idea above the dictates of a corrupt nature. Scarcely excelling their cattle in intelligence, they sink far below brutes by their vices: and, yet, is there one of these less capable of rising, under the means of grace, to 'glory and honour, immortality and eternal life,' Rom. ii, 7, than ourselves?

See then the wretched state of those, to whom our labours are directed. Of God, of their moral state, and of futurity they know comparatively nothing. And their condition is the more deplorable, because man is obstinate in proportion as he is ignorant: the grosser his superstition, the more will he cleave to it, till God 'sends out his light and his truth. Prepare ye, therefore, the way of the Lord;' for till 'the Sun of Righteousness' arise on these nations 'with healing in his wings,' notwithstanding all the endeavours of Legislators and Philosophers, 'darkness' must 'cover the earth and gross darkness the people:' Isa. lx, 2.

This leads me to make an observation or two on.

* See Lev. xviii.

II. THE MEANS OF THEIR RECOVERY.

One cannot help remarking here, on the confused and fruitless views of some pious persons. They are indeed struck with horror, when the state of the Heathen is recollected. Like persons walking through a lazar-house, they pity from their hearts the different stages of malady which lie before them, but see no present remedy. They wait for some tide or motion, they know not what. Centuries have elapsed, and hundreds of millions of souls have passed into eternity—still they wait!

But it might be of use for such persons to inquire. "Does not God work by means? Does he not command them to be used, in 'preparing his way?' Has He not promised his blessing, in the use of them? How was the way of the Lord prepared among those Gentiles, now brought to the faith of Christ? Was not our own highly favoured nation as far from God as that of any other Gentiles? and is there not reason to think we should have remained Heathens to this day, had the first Missionaries thus waited, or required some *perceivable* shaking among the dry bones before they prophesied in this our desert?"

I know of no difficulty now before a Missionary to the Heathen, that did not meet the first Missionary to this nation. We had our human sacrifices, as well as others. Our hearts were as hard, and our prejudices as great, as those of others; and our situation more insulated and unapproachable than most of theirs.

The ablest means, however, and the best concerted plans can, of themselves, do nothing. 'The glory of the Lord must be revealed,' in his mighty power, as well as in his saving truth, 'before all flesh can see the salvation of our God.' But, as the labour of the Husbandman is connected with the influences of Heaven in producing the harvest, so, in all other respects, it has been justly remarked that it is the *fool* only who expects the end without the means, since it is only in

the use of appointed means that desirable ends are promised.

This Society, I can safely assert, mean to 'prepare the way of the Lord' by exhibiting the only remedy for fallen nature; the cross of Christ, and the regenerating influence of his Spirit: and that, in the most simple and unequivocal manner possible. They have seen folly and disappointment inscribed on every *other* remedy, and on all unscriptural modifications of the true remedy;* and that, in every age and in every *place;* and they depend alone, under God, upon 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

To accomplish their end, it is evident that Missionaries must be employed among the Heathen: for 'how shall they hear without a preacher?' Rom. x. 14. But it may be necessary, perhaps, to admonish a sanguine and inexperienced zeal, to pay more attention than is usually paid at this day, to the words which follow, 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' *i. e.* How can it be expected that they should succeed in such a work, till God has called and qualified them for it? The work of a Missionary is as arduous as it is honourable: he is, in an eminent degree, a living sacrifice to God and man: he needs not, indeed, the learning and address of the Schools, but the higher attainments of divine knowledge and spiritual experience. Good men, like Moses, may be so sensible of the greatness of such an undertaking, and of their own inability and infirmities, that, even when *really* called, they may err in standing back; but there are others, whom the Apostle would have rejected as *Novices*, lest their elation should end in their falling.† Such have a zeal, indeed, but without knowledge; either of themselves, or of the work which they would undertake. They are ready to cry aloud and spare not; but, too often, it is *vox et præterea nihil*, sound without sense. They distinguish not between

* See note C. † 1 Tim. iii, 6.

business and bustle. Some truths, by *their* way of handling them, become unwholesome; being unmixed with a scriptural proportion of other important truths; this crudity, however, they mistake for 'the whole counsel of God;' and, regardless of admonition, confidently rush forward to declare it.

But what result can be reasonably expected from such an experiment? Evidently, as the fact has too often declared both at home and abroad, (and I am led to speak thus much, more from what has been observed at *home* than abroad) that the Gospel itself, under such an exhibition of it, would be rendered suspicious, if not ridiculous and abortive. Like the rashness of Israel at Ai.* such precipitance has not only brought shame and sorrow to the Church, but cause of triumph to its enemies. Thus Israel, at another time, fell before the Heathen, but thought the presence of their Ark would support their cause. Their ministers brought it into the camp; and, in a spirit of vain confidence, they 'shouted till the earth rang again.' Alas! they had but the *Symbol* of the divine presence, while God himself was departed from them. 'And the Philistines fought—Israel was smitten—the Ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were slain:' 1 Sam. iv. 10, 11.

Those who act with the purest designs (and I am persuaded each of the present Missionary Societies thus acts) cannot with all their care prevent the intrusion of specious but unsound characters. Yet we should recollect the commendation given to one of the first churches for their zeal in this respect: 'Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars.' Such carnal Gospellers may, indeed, like those of old, 'take upon them to call over those who have evil spirits, in the name of the Lord Jesus:' but the evil spirit may be expected still ready to reply, 'Jesus I know, and Paul I know.

* Joshua vii, 4, 5.

but who are ye?" and will probably also 'prevail against them,' till they return from their rash attempts to exorcise the Heathen 'naked and wounded:' Acts xix, 14, 15, 16.

On the contrary, brethren, we should endeavour to find for our messenger, a Man of God—instructed, experienced, holy, patient, laborious. This work peculiarly needs an apostolic spirit; and, for instances of this spirit, we need not ascend to the time of the Apostles. Look at the Missionary Swartz—one who has but lately been called to rest, after half a century spent in traversing thousands of miles, and that in a burning climate. Blessed with innumerable seals to his ministry, this man had acquired such a character among the Heathen, that when among a barbarous and lawless banditti—hordes that live by war and plunder, carried on against one another, and all around them: this man, I say, as one evidently engaged only on a heavenly design, was suffered to pass with his catechumen through contending parties of them, unsuspected, unmolested. They said, "*Let him alone. Let him pass. He is a man of God.*" This Apostle of our own day has saved the inhabitants of a fort from perishing by famine, when the neighbouring Heathen have refused to supply it with provision on any other assurance than that of his word. Even that tyrant, Hyder Ally, while he refused to negociate in a certain treaty with others, said, "*Send me Swartz —send me the Christian Missionary,*"—said this Mahometan: "*I will treat with him, for him only can I trust.*"

I make no apology for stating these facts in a sermon. I embrace them to demonstrate the importance of character in a Missionary. I am only sorry that the time will not permit me to enlarge upon them.

One fact more, however, I will mention. When the late Rajah of Tanjore was dying, and desired to

commit his adopted son, the present Rajah, to this Missionary, and with him, of course, the care of his dominions; the Christian, after the example of his Master, was not to be dazzled by 'the kingdom of the world, nor the glory of them.' He persuaded the dying prince to place the government of his son and of his affairs in other hands. But a greater honour was reserved for him, which he *could* not refuse: for, at his death, the present Rajah shed a flood of tears over his body, mourned deeply while attending his funeral, and has written to England for a monument which he intends to erect in Tanjore to the memory of his virtues.*

God, indeed, needs neither the piety nor parts of such men as Swartz, Brainerd, and others of like mind, to effect his work; but, he has made it evident, that 'them that honour' him he 'will honour:' nor have we reason to doubt but that the faithful and zealous labours of the Missionaries, sent by different Societies at this time among the Heathen, will be crowned with success—*will be*, did I say? they have been already. May God add to them a thousandfold!

Among other *Means*, let us recommend to our Missionaries to dwell on such truths, as are simple and essential; that they carefully avoid positions, which remain doubtful even among real Christians; and that, while others only amuse or distract the flock, they should labour to *feed* it. Certainly, says a great Author,† "as those wines, which flow from the first treading of the grape, are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them the roughness of the husk and the stone; so are those doctrines best and wholesomest, which flow from a gentle crush of the Scripture, and are not wrung into controversies and common-place."

On the topic of *Means* I would also remark, that.

* See note D. † Lord Bacon.

while, through education and connections, the most upright and useful men will be found in different denominations of Christians—and while this diversity in circumstantials, when wisely and charitably conducted, may be overruled to the producing greater general effect (as the loadstone is found more powerful in parts than undivided)—so the greatest care should be taken, that, in this variety of effort, a unity of design may be preserved. Each Missionary Society is our natural ally: we should cordially co-operate with it, so far as is consistent with our plan: we should rejoice in its success; and should carefully watch lest on any occasion a carnal jealousy should tempt 'Ephraim to envy Judah, or Judah to vex Ephraim:' Isa. xi, 13. By performing our own proper parts in the grand concert, we may give a greater force to the harmony. On the contrary, if, influenced by narrow views, we waste our strength in weakening a common interest, certainly no greater gratification can be afforded to the prince of darkness and of discord:—nothing can be more opposed to the mind of Christ. 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him because he followeth not with us; but Jesus said, Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us:' Luke ix, 49, 50.

I am necessarily restrained, in a single discourse, from remarking on other *means* proper to be employed in this work, such as Translations of the Scriptures—dispersing useful Tracts—forming profitable Connections—and watching providential Openings, especially in countries under some civilization. These depend on a variety of circumstances, and will I doubt not be wisely regarded by this Society. I need not speak of pecuniary assistance, since the public liberality of Christians, on these occasions, is above praise.

One means, however, should never be forgotten: I mean fervent prayer to the Lord of the Harvest, that he would multiply those faithful labourers, which we

now find such difficulty in procuring; that he would direct and support them in their labours; that, according to his promise, he would 'make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert:' Isa. xliii, 19. Without the arm of our God, we have painful experience how little we can do, even in our own families; and, *with* it, we need not fear to 'prepare the way of the Lord' among the Heathen.

I therefore proceed to the last consideration, namely,

III. THE MOTIVES TO ATTEMPT IT.

1. The GLORY OF GOD, surely, should stand first of these.

'The Lord hath formed all things for himself.' He could propose no inferior end; and this, his glory, should be our prime motive. But with this grand end he has connected the salvation of sinners; and that, by such an astonishing display of his grace in Christ Jesus, as claims the affection of our hearts as well as the acquiescence of our understandings. On this ground let us join the Universal Church, in crying 'Thy kingdom come;' in seeking to promote this kingdom to the utmost of our power; in cherishing a holy grief and indignation, that ignorance and idolatry should cover so large a part of the earth, and that so little zeal should be felt for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in a land partaking so largely of his benefits.

While, therefore, the enemies of God point the finger of scorn at this our attempt to 'declare his glory among the Heathen,' Ps. xcvi, 3, let us give glory to his name by trusting, that, at 'the blowing of his great trumpet, they shall come who are ready to perish,' Isa. xxvii, 13—'that, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles,' Mal. i, 19—that He 'will say to the North give up, and to the South keep not back.'

Isa. xliii, 6, till the knowledge of the Lord cover the earth.

2. The INFINITE WORTH OF ONE SOUL is another motive which should animate our zeal in an undertaking like this.

It has been justly observed, that a *present* salvation of all the individuals on the face of the globe would not be of equal moment with the *eternal* salvation of one soul; because there will arrive a period in eternity when that single soul will have existed as long as the lives of the former added together, and yet is still to exist. What then are the splendid projects of statesmen, warriors, or philosophers, compared with that of recovering an immortal spirit? The world's conqueror sat down and wept for another bauble; as well he might: he had no knowledge of any thing more valuable. But we know that the 'gain of a whole world' would not compensate for the 'loss of one soul:' Matt. xvi, 26. How noble a design, then, is that of the recovery of those who are as yet 'without Christ—strangers from the covenants of promise—having no hope, and without God in the world!' Eph. ii, 12.

3. Our OBLIGATIONS, AS ENLIGHTENED GENTILES, should be felt.

Many of us stand special witnesses of this truth. We are experimentally assured that the Bible in our hands is the Word of Life. We have the clearest evidence, that, if any principle of divine light or life be found in our own hearts, it has been received alone 'through the faith of the Son of God.' But to what end and purpose has it been received?—that we should look with indifference on the far greater part of the habitable globe, lying in the grossest darkness and wretchedness?—that we should pass on, like the 'Priest and Levite,' Luke x, 31, 32, beholding such misery with a cruel apathy?—that the faithfulness of God, in his promise to the Heathen, should be doubt-

ed?—that Satan should be suffered to proceed, uninterruptedly, in his work of deceiving the nations? What strange revolution has taken place in the Christian World, that its first converts should be more ready to lay down their lives for the Gospel, than *we* to enter into a plan for its propagation? Verily the zeal of some of the *dark* ages of Christianity will, in this respect, put us to shame.

Found among the oaks of our ancient Druids, with our painted bodies and bloody rites, if some Christian Missionary, pitying our wretched state, had not 'prepared the way of the Lord' among us, we had probably remained in darkness to this very day. But God hath caused a great light to shine among us. 'Freely we have received:' let us 'freely give:' Matt. x, 8. Let us endeavour to remove that great stumbling block to the Heathen, I mean, the conduct of those Christians in name only, who appear on their coasts merely for traffic. Let us show them the effects of *real* Christianity. Let us prove, that, like its Author, it will spare neither cost nor pains to 'seek and to save them that are lost:'—that instead of offering violence to their persons or property, we seek not *theirs* but *them*:—that for their salvation. Christians are willing to be 'made a spectacle to angels and to men:—that being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: and become all things to all men that we may by all means save some:' 1 Cor. iv, 9—12, ix, 22.

Thus, while the Sons of Earth (the slave traders particularly) entail an odium upon the very name of Christianity—and the Sons of Hell are endeavouring (and that with horrid strides of late) to root out the very remembrance of it from the earth, may we, as the 'Sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, shine as lights in the world:' Phil. ii, 15.

Some, indeed, have not scrupled to ask, 'What have

we to do with the religion of other nations?"—a question so strange to be proposed to a Christian Nation, that it is well if a real Christian can preserve himself so as to 'give an answer with meekness and fear:' 1 Pet. iii, 15.

For what *is* the religion of the Heathen? Have we not just seen it to be a 'chamber of the most abominable imagery?' To speak of the superstitions of the Heathen, under the term *religion*, is to throw dust in the eyes of the ignorant. And what is our design in these Missions? Is it not to bring immortal souls 'from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by the faith of Christ!' Acts xxvi, 18. And does any one ask, "What have Christians to do with this?"

Suppose the millions, of which the Heathen World consists, to be sick, and that through a poison which was artfully introduced as a medicine, and which must destroy both them and their posterity:—suppose also that any one had a specific, and the *only* specific, which could relieve them under the effects of that poison:—I ask what notion the Objector would form of a person who should live and die with this specific in his cabinet, crying, "What have I to do with the remedies of other nations?" Would not he say, "This Querist has either no *faith* in his remedy, or no *feeling* in his heart?"

I see a poor Hindoo driven by a guilty conscience to inquire after an expiation: I see a Bramin directing him to cross a desert of a thousand miles to the temple of Jaggernaut in Orissa; and there, after the practice of severe austerities, to offer the costliest gifts, which he can present: he does all this; and, on his return, he receives a little consecrated rice: he attempts to subsist upon this, till, famished, he perishes on a plain,—white, to this day, with the bones of such deluded pilgrims. Is this romance? Nay, it is

a well attested fact. But who among us, that knows the virtue of that 'blood which cleanseth from all sin,' who would not rejoice to sieze the hand of this wretched votary, and say, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'

4. THE SATISFACTION OF HAVING MADE THE ATTEMPT, will be another, and that no slight motive, to the conscientious.

Events are God's. He for wise reasons, may run his dispensations quite counter to our well intended designs. He will, however, honour the intention, as he said in the case of David, 'Thou shalt not build me a house: thy son shall build it, nevertheless, IT WAS WELL THAT IT WAS IN THY HEART,' 1 Kings viii, 18—or in that of the woman who came with her box of ointment—'Let her alone, she hath done what she could.' Mark xiv, 6, 7, 8.

While, therefore, the Lord accepts our endeavours, we shall ever taste the satisfaction of having made them, whatever be the event. We shall comfortably reflect, that we are embarked under the sanction of a divine *precept*—a faithful *promise*—an irresistible *providence*—and a general disposition in the Christian World to join in the attempt. Our children may see a glorious harvest arise from the seed now sown: they may see it spread from nation to nation: yea and it shall so spread (whoever has the honour of sowing it) for the 'earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea:' Isa. xi, 9. Till this glorious event be accomplished, our hearts may rest in his bosom who gave it us in *promise*. It is enough for us now, that 'we have done what we could;'—done it, on the spur of a favourable occasion,—and done it in the only period in eternity in which such a work *can* be done by us.

There is, indeed, a class of men in the Christian Church, who are ready to damp every proposal, that does not originate with themselves, or stand recommended by high patronage. If 'we pipe to them.

they will not dance: if we mourn, they will not weep.' "This scheme," say they, "is but Enthusiasm pursuing its phantom. It is the project of a Party. It will come to nothing." A steady and consistent Christian will, however, pity this mixture of mistake and malignity: he will neither be surprised nor moved by such misrepresentations. He will consider the proposal itself, rather than the proposer. He will advert to its real worth and weight, the probable means of its success, and the motives which should actuate his heart in prosecuting it. Thus taking his well-considered stand, he will persevere by the help of his God; having this testimony in his conscience, that he does what he *can*, and would do better if he *could*.

I have reason to hope, Brethren, that most of you are thus proceeding: and thus may you proceed, till the awful hour arrives, when that only which is really substantial will comfort you! In that hour, when life is viewed as but a dream just vanished, when every earthly possession and enjoyment is departing, when your dearest friend can but say, "Farewell." In that hour, to be borne up by the faith of Jesus, and to feel the comfort of having stood a witness of its power to others—this will prove a solid satisfaction, which nothing beside can yield. 'Blessed are the dead, who thus die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them:' Rev. xiv, 13.

With the subject, as it respects the Heathen, I have done. Yet I cannot conclude without adverting to a common, but fatal error. Too many are observed anxious to bring the Heathen to Christ, who yet give strong reason to fear they have not savingly approached him themselves. They are *zealously affected*, and that *in a good thing;* but seem never to have laid to heart how much that very thing is the 'one thing needful' for their own souls. "'Prepare ye the way of

the Lord,'" say they: "for till Christ is brought to a people they must perish for lack of knowledge." Most true! But most true it also is, that, till a people are brought to Christ, *they* too must perish, whether it be in England or in Japan. "All you can tell me," said one lately on a dying bed, "All you can tell me, I have long well known; but I tell you that I have lived without real religion. I was forward in the Church: but fixed in the world: and my profession now only serves to terrify me!"

O ye, who labour to build an ark for others, but enter it not yourselves—ye, who would convert the Heathen, but remain yourselves unchanged—tremble, lest even the most blind and profligate of those whom you would convert, should one day rise up in judgment against you. 'It shall be more tolerable, even for Sodom, in that day,' than for any among us who repent not: Matt. xi, 24.

On the contrary, may He, whose glory we seek in this Institution, enable us so to 'abide in Him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.' 1 John ii, 28; but, receiving then the full accomplishment of those promises for which we now wait, may we join in proclaiming, "THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST, AND HE SHALL REIGN FOR EVER AND EVER!" *Amen.*

NOTES.

A.—p. 58.

. . . . . *urge the Heathen, &c.*

The Gentile Religion, in early ages, evidently appears to have been a religion of *fear*—and the same it has been found in later times, and continues to this day——Of the length of time, during which the practice of human sacrifice continued among the Northern nations, Mr. Thorkelin, who was perfectly conversant with Northern literature, furnishes several instances in his *Essay on the Slave Trade*——Ditmarus charges the Danes with having put to death, in their great sacrifices, no fewer than ninety-nine slaves at once—(*Loccen Antiq. Sueo Goth.* lib. I. cap. 3.)—In Sweden, on urgent occasions, and particularly in times of scarcity and famine, they sacrificed kings and princes.—Loccenius (*Histor. Rer. Suecic*, lib. I. p. 5,) gives the following account: 'Tanta fame Suecia afflicta est, ut ei vix gravior unquam incubuerit; cives inter se dissidentes, cum pœnam delictorum divinam agnoscerent, primo anno boves, altero homines, tertio regem ipsum, velut *iræ cœlestis piaculum*, ut sibi persuasum habebant, Odino immolabant'—and we are told that the Swedes, at one time, boasted of having sacrificed five kings in a single day.—Adam of Bremen, (*Hist. Eccles.* cap. 234,) speaking of the awful grove of Upsal, a place distinguished for the celebration of those horrid rites, says, 'there was not a single tree in it, that was not reverenced, as gifted with a portion of the divinity, because stained with gore, and foul with human putrefaction.'——In all the other Northern nations, without exception, the practice is found to have prevailed."

"The same dreadful usage is found to exist, to this day, in Africa; where, in the inland parts, they sacrificed the captives taken in war to their fetiches—as appears from Snelgrave, who, in the king of Dahoome's camp, was witness to his sacrificing multitudes to the deity of his nation. Among the Islanders of the South Seas, we likewise learn from Capt. Cook, that human sacrifices were very frequent: he speaks of them as customary in Otaheite and the Sandwich Islands; and in the island of Tongataboo, he mentions ten men offered at one festival. All these, however, are far exceeded by the pious massacre of human beings in the nations of America. The accounts given by Acosta, Gomara, and other Spanish writers, of the monstrous carnage of this kind, in these parts of the world, are almost incredible. The annual sacrifices of the Mexicans require many thousands of victims; and in Peru two hundred children were devoted for the health of Ynca.—(*Acost. Hist. of Ind.* p. 379—388.

ed. 1604.—*Anton. de Solis*, and *Clavig. Hist. of Mex.* bib. vi, sect. 18, 19, 20.) Mr. Maurice also informs us, that at this day, among certain tribes of the Mahrattas, human victims, distinguished by their beauty and youthful bloom, are fattened like oxen, for the altar. (*Ind. Antiq.* p. 843.)"

"The subject of this note may derive additional light from the nature of the *representations* of the divinity among the Heathen nations. Thus, in the images of the Deity among the Indians, we find an awful and terrific power the ruling feature: thousands of outstretched arms and hands, generally filled with swords and daggers, bows and arrows, and every instrument of destruction, express to the terrified worshipper the cruel nature of the God. The collars of human sculls, the forked tongues, shooting from serpent's jaws, the appendages of mutilated corses, and all the other circumstances of terrific cruelty which distinguish the Black Goddess, Seeva, Haree, and other of the idols of Hindostan, (*Maurice's Ind. Antiq.* pp. 182, 253, 327, 381, 382, 856, 857, 882,) sufficiently manifest the genius of that religion which presented these as objects of adoration. To the hideous idols of Mexico, one of which was of most gigantic size, seated upon huge snakes, and expressly denominated *Terror*, (*Clavig.* lib. 6, sect. 6,) it was usual to present the heart, torn from the breast of the human victim, and to insert it, while yet warm and reeking, in the jaws of the blood-thirsty divinity. (Ibid. lib. 6, sect. 18.)"

"Nor have these cruel modes of worship been confined to the Heathens of antiquity. By the same unworthy conceptions of the Deity, the Pagans of later times have been led to the same unworthy expressions of their religious feelings. Thus, in the narrative of Cook's voyages, we are informed, that it was usual with the inhabitants of the Friendly Islands, when afflicted with any dangerous disorder, to cut off their little finger as an offering to the Deity, which they deemed efficacious to procure their recovery: and in the Sandwich Islands, it was the custom to strike out the fore-teeth, as a propitiatory sacrifice, to avert the anger of the Eatooa, or divinity. If we look again to the religion of the Mexicans, we meet the same sort of savage superstition, but carried to a more unnatural excess. Clavigero [lib. 6, sect. 22,] says, 'it makes one shudder to read the austerities which they exercised upon themselves, either in atonement of their transgressions, or in preparation for their festivals.'—and then proceeds, in this and the following sections, to give a dreadful description indeed of the barbarous self-lacerations, practised both by the Mexicans and Tlascalans, in the discharge of their religious duties. And yet he afterward asserts, [V. ii, p. 446, 4to. ed. Lond.] that all these, horrid as they are, must be deemed inconsiderable, when compared with the inhumanities of the ancient priests of Bellona and Cybele, of whom we have already spoken; and still more so, when contrasted with those of the penitents of the East Indies and Japan. With good reason indeed, has the author made this concluding remark: for of the various austerities, which have

been at different times practised, as means of propitiating superior powers, there are none that can be ranked with those of the devotees of Hindostan, at the present day. Dreadful as Mr. Maurice represents the rites of Mithra and Eleusis to have been, dreadful as we find the other rites that have been noticed, yet their accumulated horrors fall infinitely short of the penitentiary tortures endured by the Indian Yogee, the Gymnosophist of modern times. 'To suspend themselves on high in cages, upon trees considered sacred, refusing all sustenance, but such as may keep the pulse of life just beating; to hang aloft upon tenter-hooks, and voluntarily bear inexpressible agonies, to thrust themselves by hundreds under the wheels of immense machines, that carry about their unconscious gods, where they are instantly crushed to atoms; at other times, to hurl themselves from precipices of stupendous height; now to stand up to their necks in rivers, till rapacious alligators come and devour them; now to bury themselves in snow till frozen to death; to measure with their naked bodies, trained over burning sands, the ground lying between one pagoda and another, distant perhaps many leagues; or to brave, with fixed eyes, the ardour of a meridian sun between the tropics;' these, with other penances not less tremendous, which Mr. Maurice has fully detailed in the last volume of his *Indian Antiquities*, are the means whereby the infatuated worshippers of Brahma hope to conciliate the deity, and to obtain the blessings of immortality. And by these *all* hope to attain those blessings, except only the wretched race of the Chandalahs, whom, by the unalterable laws of Brahma, no repentance, no mortification can rescue from the doom of eternal misery; and against whom the gates of happiness are for ever closed. See *Maur. Ind. Antiq.* pp. 960, 961."

The above is part of a note of that profound author, Dr. Magee, annexed to his Discourses on the Scriptural Doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice, Note 4, p. 89.

B.—p. 58.

"*So has Christianity raised the standard*," &c.

"It will not be pretended, that, in any Christian country, a father may either adopt his new-born infant, if I may use the expression, or abandon it to famine and beasts of prey; that the massacre of slaves is part of a funeral solemnity in honour of great men deceased; that horrid obscenities form any part of religious worship; that the most unnatural crimes are not only practised without shame, but celebrated by poets, and coolly mentioned as customary things, even by the gravest writers; that, to gratify an ambitious profligate, inoffensive nations are invaded, enslaved or exterminated; that, for the amusement of a few young soldiers, two or three thousand poor unarmed and innocent men may be murdered in one night, with the connivance, nay, and by the authority, of the law; that the most worth-

less tyrants are flattered with divine honours when alive, and worshipped as gods when dead; that prisoners of war are enslaved, or impaled, or crucified, for having fought in defence of their country, and in obedience to their lawful rulers; that captive kings and nations are publicly insulted by their conquerors, in those barbarous solemnities, which of old were called triumphs; that men are trained up for the purpose of cutting one another to pieces, by thousands and ten thousands in a month, for the diversion of the public; that, as the father of gods and men, a king of Crete is worshipped, whom even his worshippers believe to have been guilty of innumerable crimes of the most infamous nature; while among the other objects of divine worship are to be reckoned thieves, drunkards, harlots, ruffians; to say nothing of those underling idols, whose functions and attributes it is not decent even to name."—*Dr. Beattie's Evidences*, p. 128.

C.—p. 63.

"*Unscriptural modification of the true remedy*," &c.

"When the Apostles found that the doctrine of *Christ crucified* gave the utmost offence to their hearers; was to the 'Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness:' had they acted on the principles of mere worldly policy, they would quickly have changed their tone, would have dissembled, or softened, or concealed this obnoxious article. They would have made use of art and management, similar perhaps to that which the Jesuits in China are said to have adopted. It is a charge brought against those missionaries by some writers, and believed by others of considerable authority, that, finding the people of that country exceedingly scandalized at the doctrine of a crucified Redeemer, they thought it prudent to deny that Christ was ever crucified. They affirmed, that it was nothing more than a calumny invented by the Jews, to throw a disgrace on Christianity. And what did they gain by this ingenious piece of craft? Did they secure a better reception for the Gospel, and establish themselves more firmly in the good opinion of mankind? Alas! Christianity no longer exists in China, and they themselves no longer exist as a society. Such are the effects of worldly policy and worldly wisdom."—*See 10th Sermon of the Bishop of London*, p. 243.

D.—p. 66.

THE LETTER FROM THE RAJAH OF TANJORE.

"*To the Honourable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*

"Honourable Sirs:

"I have requested of your Missionaries to write to you, their Superiors and Friends, and to apply to you, in my name, for a Monument of Marble, to be erected in their Church, that is in my Capital

and Residency, to perpetuate the memory of the late Rev. Father *Swartz*, and to manifest the great esteem I have for the character of that great and good man, and the gratitude I owe him, my Father, my Friend, the Protector and Guardian of my Youth; and now I beg leave to apply to you myself, and to beg that, upon my account, you will order such a Monument for the late Reverend Missionary Father *Swartz*, to be made, and to be sent out to me, that it may be fixed to the pillar that is next to the pulpit from which he preached. The pillars of the church are about two cubits broad.

"May you, Honourable Sirs, ever be enabled to send to this country such Missionaries as are like the late Rev. Mr. *Swartz*.

"I am, Honourable Sirs,

"Yours, faithfully, and truly,

"SERFOGEE RAJAH.

"*Tanjore*, *May* 28, 1801."

"The Society concurred in opinion with the *East India* Mission Committee, that the Contents of this Letter from the Rajah of *Tanjore*, do bear strong testimony to the high character of the late worthy and invaluable Missionary Mr. *Swartz;* that it will be proper to comply with the request of his Highness; and that steps be taken by the Committee to have a suitable Monument constructed, as soon as may be, and that the same be sent out to *Tanjore*, to be placed in the Mission Church there."—*From the Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, 1802, p. 140.

THE CHARACTER AND COMMENDATION OF A FAITHFUL MINISTER.

A

SERMON

PREACHED

JAN. 8, 1808,

AT THE CHURCH OF THE UNITED PARISHES

OF

ST. MARY WOOLNOTH AND ST. MARY WOOLCHURCH HAW, LOMBARD-STREET,

ON THE DEATH OF THEIR LATE RECTOR,

THE REV. JOHN NEWTON,

WHO DEPARTED

December 21, 1807, in the Eighty-Third Year of his Age

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Author of this Discourse has endeavoured to meet the request of the Executors and Friends of the Deceased, by publishing all that his notes and recollection will supply. He hopes that his having MEMOIRS of the late Rev. Mr. Newton now in the press, will account for so little having been said in the Sermon respecting the circumstances of the life and death of that eminent character. He has often had occasion to remark how spiritless a sermon appears when printed, which, in a more free delivery of it, is felt impressive; but, in both instances, he trusts it will suffice, that, under great bodily pain and infirmity, "*he hath done what he could.*"

A

SERMON.

&c.

LUKE, XII, 42, 43.

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

I SHOULD not have ventured to appear this day in this place, and on this solemn occasion, but at the express desire of your departed Minister: nor can I think of any scripture which more suitably applies to his past character and present state, than the passage before us. May a divine blessing accompany our meditations on it; that we may not only 'mark the perfect man, and behold the upright,' but that our *end*, also, like his, may be *peace*!

Our Lord had said, v. 35, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding: that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

'Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

'And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over

his household to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord. when he cometh, shall find so doing.'

As if Jesus had said, "Though *all* have a general concern in the words which I have spoken, YOU, my disciples and ministers, have a special interest in them, and a particular obligation laid upon you by them. You are not only *servants* in general: but servants also of a particular description: you are placed as *stewards* over my household; having a peculiar and specific charge to execute. And blessed are you, if your Lord. when he cometh, shall find you executing it faithfully and wisely."

In the words of the text, taken in connection with those which lead to it, we have our Lord's view of the CHARACTER and COMMENDATION of a faithful Minister. He is represented in the text, both as a steward and a servant: as a SERVANT he is before described as vigilant and prepared; as a STEWARD, he is faithful and wise. Let us attend to both descriptions in this account of,

I. His CHARACTER.

The faithful Minister's character resembles that of a trusty *servant* watching the coming of his Lord. For even among men, such a servant will not only consider his wages, but also the obligations which he is under. If his Master be from home, especially at a late hour, he will stand prepared to receive him on his return. If (as in the East) long garments are in use, he will have them *girded about*, that no impediment may prevent his activity. If the night requires a lamp or torch, it will be kept *burning*. He even watches his master's tread: he knows his knock: he springs to open the door: his very face welcomes him; and, whether his master comes at the second or third watch, such a servant complains not, he sleeps not, but steadily remains on his post. "I know not," says he, "at what hour my Lord may come: but I

well know in what position he ought to find me." It is nothing to him, that other servants in the same house may be off *their* watch. Some may be absent, some gaming, some wasting their master's substance, some stealing his property, some abusing his character, and some quarrelling and fighting. But what is all this to Him? His thoughts are on his Lord.

Thus the vigilant and prepared servant, who is now called off his post, saw indeed and lamented the state of the household in which he had long kept watch; and faithfully protested against the neglect, carnality, and contention which he observed therein: but while he thus warned the unruly, his own heart was continually fixed on the coming of his Master. His own heart spake its real feelings, when he wrote that Hymn which you have often sung:

> "Fix my heart and eyes on thine,
> What are other objects worth?
> But to see thy glories shine
> Is a heav'n begun on earth."

Thus, I say, with his 'loins girded,' with his 'lights burning,' and looking for the coming of his Lord, departed JOHN NEWTON, servant of the Most High God.

But this *servant* is also described as a faithful and wise STEWARD; one set over the household of God, and expressly appointed to his office of administering therein. 'Let a man,' saith the Apostle, 'so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.' But the Steward is not faithful, if he does not give the *due portion* to each: not putting them off with half a meal. He is not faithful, if he regards the *quantity*, but pays no attention to the *quality*: it must be their portion of MEAT: it must be that which will support and *nourish* them. A Steward needs also to be not faithful, but *wise*, that he may be able to discern both

the portion of meat and the due *season* for delivering it. He must be *wise*, to mark the wants, complaints, and infirmities of the household: and he must be *wise*, to discriminate and patiently to bear the false charges and unkind remarks which he often hears while he thus acts faithfully and wisely. A minister is sometimes called to exercise a solitary faith and an invincible patience, in order steadily to proceed for the good of his Master's household, in the midst of the various cabals and impositions which he sees continually forming in it.

Thus acted your late Minister, 'as a good steward of the manifold grace of God.' He faithfully, as well as 'rightly, divided the word of truth' among you: giving 'their portion to each in due season.' He dispensed the word of God, and that only. He employed it as 'profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,' and 'for instruction in righteousness.' Whatever men may plead for elaborate discourses, on moral goodness and the rewards of virtue, he determined to advance the doctrine of a Crucified Saviour, as the only hope and strength of fallen man; whose 'flesh is meat indeed,' and whose 'blood is drink indeed.' And he dispensed this, as one that had felt the power of it in his own soul, and tasted the savour of the *meat* which he delivered to others. A few of his hearers might, at times, come rather to find fault than to be fed; but he regarded not the person of men: he went on with his work, seeming to say with holy Herbert,

"Thou shalt answer, Lord, for me."

I think I may assert, without fear of contradiction from such as knew the character of your late Minister, that no man ever executed his office with a more *single eye*, or a more *disinterested heart*. Unlike that unjust steward in the parable, who, throughout all his management, merely considered how to keep himself from sinking under his delinquency, your late Minister

considered simply the interest of his Master and his household. He might truly say, "'God is witness, that, instead of being burdensome, we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.'"

Ill-nature, indeed, might term this statement a *flattery of the dead*. But I confidently reply, No; in no wise. It is too late now to question the fact. Most of you know that I have stated but the simple truth, and that the truth itself demands this of me. This thing was not done in a corner, or in the presence of two or three interested witnesses; but it was done in the centre of the largest city in the world, amidst a multitude of disaffected witnesses, and before the eyes of the Church of God, to the members of which he might justly have appealed, 'Ye know, from the first day that I came among you, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons: serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears and temptations: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.'

But the *character* and *commendation* of your late faithful and wise Steward must be referred to a higher bar of decision than yours or mine. The Judge of

the world, who describes his character, pronounces what we proceed to consider—

II. His COMMENDATION.

'Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.'

Blessed, indeed, if he received no other commendation than THE APPROBATION OF HIS LORD.

'He, when he cometh, shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and then shall every man,' thus found faithful, 'have praise of God.' Sin has made such a bedlam of this world, that it is full of false associations. 'The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!' but, when the Master comes, he will say, (and it is enough if he says it,) 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant! thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' To set forth the special honour which Christ will put upon those servants who wait for his second coming, he employs, in the 37th and 44th verses, allusions to those ancient customs, where the master, at certain festivals, attended upon the servants, and afforded peculiar tokens of his respect and confidence to the faithful individuals among them. It is as if he had said, in other words, 'Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Where there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him: they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads. There shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever.'

Blessed is such a servant, also, in THE TESTIMONY OF THE HOUSEHOLD, over which his Lord had placed him as a Steward.

Speak, ye, who have been the seals of his ministry

—'begotten again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead!' Can ye refrain from pronouncing him *blessed*, who was the happy instrument of making you feel your *ruin* and your *relief?* Will not many of you, who have been warned, instructed, encouraged, and tenderly conducted as by a nursing father—meet him in the great day with heart-felt gratitude? You feel what you owe to his labours; and what a peculiar act of grace it was that placed you where the bread of life was dispensed in season, with integrity, wisdom, and affection. It matters not what others thought of your privileges: but it is impossible for *you* to think of them, and not to say, 'Blessed is that servant.'

BLESSED is that servant, likewise, in THE TESTIMONY OF HIS OWN CONSCIENCE.

I remember, on hearing a pious minister under depression, express some doubts of his own conversion, Mr. Newton replied, "Whatever I may doubt on other points, I cannot doubt whether there has been a certain gracious transaction between God and *my* soul. I cannot doubt whenever I look at my former and my present objects, whether I ought not to cry, 'What hath God wrought!'" It was not the peculiar privilege of St. Paul, to say, 'I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give me at that day:' for, observe the words following, where he adds, 'not to me ONLY, but unto all them that love his appearing.' Such a witness will not detract from the glory of God: he rather magnifies the power of his grace: he stands, like Legion, as a monument of it: and he will cry, after his boldest efforts to display it, 'Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.' In the testimony of his own conscience, therefore, 'Blessed is that servant.'

One cannot help here contrasting the real state of

such a servant with his reception among men. A real Christian, and much more a Christian Minister, is a character utterly unknown in the world. He reminds us of that Scripture, 'He, that is spiritual, judgeth (or discerneth*) all things, yet he himself is judged (or discerned) of no man:' that is, he knows *them*, but they do not know *him*.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprise, with the real servant of God, if he be scouted as a fanatic, by the profane; if he be scorned, by the proud; if his character be misunderstood by the ignorant; or if his doctrine be wilfully misrepresented, by the malicious. All this he is taught to expect; and all this, and much more than this, he is willing patiently to bear. For, as that 'faithful witness in heaven,' the moon, appears steadily to pursue its course among opposing clouds, cheering the pilgrim through the horrors of the night, while owls hoot and dogs bark at its splendour; so the faithful witness on earth above mentioned, while he illuminates his particular station,—hailed by the children of light, but neglected, if not hated, by others,—will recollect how his master was received, and that he testified, 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.'

Consider such a Minister coming to bring men from their state of apostacy back to God. If we regard the standard of truth on this point, and see the end of men, we shall learn, that 'many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.' But, where are their instructors? and what is said of them? It is added, 'and they, that be wise, (or instructors, as the word signifies,) shall shine as the brightness of the firmanent; and they, that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'

One cannot help viewing with grief the reception

* αναχρινει, *discerneth*.

which such an Instructor meets with, when placed in the centre of a great city. In such a station he may present (as your late Instructor did) the inestimable treasure of the Gospel, not only on the Sunday, but in the course of the week. What then did you see? The Merchant rushes to the Exchange, heedless of his privilege: some friend points to the church as he passes, but he replies, "I have no time now: 'I pray thee have me excused.'" The Banker, engrossed with the 'gold that perisheth,' forgets that 'gold tried in the fire' which would make him really rich; and he also 'prays to be excused.' The Stock-broker hastens to his one object, and inquires of the first man he meets, "How are things now?" Would to God he knew! Would to God he had asked your late Minister as to the real state of things! things that infinitely more belong to his peace, than those which he seeks. The lady drives hastily by the church to purchase a toy, totally unmindful of that 'pearl of great price' now offered to her without money. In the mean time we are deafened with the clamour. Commerce, with its ten thousand voices, seems to cry aloud, "Money is the *one thing needful*." Crowds passing to the *Temple of Mammon*, are ready to trample you under foot, as you endeavour to approach the *Temple of God*.

Besotted men! To pursue business, is your duty; but to pursue that ONLY, is your crime. What! has Wisdom so long cried aloud among you for this? Has she uttered her voice 'in the chief place of concourse, that scorners should still delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? What shall it profit you,' cries her preacher, 'if ye gain the whole world, and at length lose your own souls? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' Some, with a death-like apathy, pass the church, and say, 'He seems a good man:' others say, 'Nay, but he deceiveth the people: when will he die and his name perish?' We reply,

NEVER. For, at length, the JUDGE HIMSELF rises up, and pronounces, 'Blessed is that servant—yea, blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching!'

'The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.' HE SHALL ENTER INTO PEACE. The change of your late Minister is but a change of preferment: it is but the call of his Master to 'come up higher'—to take his harp, his palm, his crown, and bid an eternal farewell to all his cares, and sorrows. Blessed are those servants: 'for God shall wipe all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.'

Having attempted to drop a few general hints on the CHARACTER and COMMENDATION of a faithful Minister, and having shown their application to your late Pastor, permit me to address a word,

I. TO HIS STATED CONGREGATION.

Your vigilant and prepared Servant is now called off his post: your faithful and wise Steward is gone to deliver his account. He doubtless will do it with joy, having made it the grand object of his life. But let us consider, my dear hearers, the account which *we* also have to give. If special benefits involve special obligations, where are the people that have enjoyed your privileges? Some of you are his spiritual children, born and brought up in this House of Prayer. Many of you have been 'nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine,' as by a nourishing-father. Others have been warned to 'flee from the wrath to come,' as by a faithful monitor; and others cautioned by a guide who seemed in his experience to have explored the very 'depths of Satan.' The afflicted have been comforted: the doubtful have been relie-

ved: and ministers (among whom I stand as a witness) have been enlarged and confirmed, as by a father in Christ.

Let us admire and adore the grace, which 'plucked such a brand from the burning,' and marvellously formed him afterwards to be that 'vessel of honour' which he became. Let us recollect to whom we are indebted for such a Steward; who, with wisdom and faithfulness, apportioned our meat in due season. And, if the remark of one of our divines be just, that "a faithful minister being taken away before the age of threescore is taken in judgment," let us stand encouraged, that the departed lived far beyond the age of man before he was removed; and let us earnestly pray to the Lord of the Harvest, that this Church, which had been favoured with eminent Pastors long before the coming of your late minister, may enjoy a continuance of them till time shall be no more.

But infallible authority lays a ground for the comfort of every mourner in Zion when it enjoins, 'Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation,'* or as the word is, the blessed *departure* which they made; and more especially considering that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' He ever lives! He, the great 'Shepherd and Bishop of souls,' will still provide for his flock; that 'where he is, they may be also.'

Mr. Newton gradually sunk as the setting sun, shedding to the last those declining rays, which gilded and gladdened the dark valley. In the latter conversations which I had with him, he expressed an unshaken faith in the eternal realities; and, when he could scarcely utter words, he remained a firm witness

* The word ἐκβάσις, here rendered, *the end of their conversation*, is used but once more in the New-Testament, 1 Cor. iii, 10, where it is justly rendered *escape*.

to the truths which he had preached. In so very gradual a declension, interesting particulars can scarcely be expected: should any be gathered, they will appear in the Memoirs of his Life, which I have collected under his direction; and which will further tend to prove the force of truth, the blessedness of its service, and the greatness of its present as well as future reward.

My honoured Brethren in the Ministry—'Servants, Stewards, Watchmen!' how much have we to learn on this occasion! What need to cry, 'My Father, my Father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! Let a double portion of thy spirit rest upon us!' For *our* hour is also hastening: *our* account is soon to be given in: *our* Master is coming: *our* character will be proclaimed: *our* state will be fixed! Think on these momentous things. Think of your Lord's words, 'Be ye ready also: For the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'

II. To his PARISHIONERS, also, I would address the feelings of my heart.

I speak more especially to such as have not duly appreciated the ministry of their late worthy Pastor. The worn-out body of him who long entreated you to be mindful of the day of your visitation, now is a mass of inanimate clay under that Communion-Table —his lamp broken—his tongue silent—

> "Disarm'd, disabled, like a wretch that's gagg'd,
> And cannot tell his ills to passers by,"

while he borrows my tongue to address you on the occasion.

And what can I say to you that he has not said a thousand times? I can only say, Lay the day of your visitation to heart, for God has spoken to you again and again by the mouth of his Servant. If he were to return from the dead, he could only repeat the same message; and then sigh and say with one of old, 'Oh

that they were wise! that they understood this! that they could consider their latter end!'

Some of his parishioners have, I hope, felt the truth of his character; and are now convinced that he was that very man who kept his eye on his sacred rule, inquiring what sort of man the Minister of a Parish ought to be. Since his death, perhaps you have been ready to say, 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his:' for the true minister is seldom fully known till he is gone. But let us allow something to imagination--Let us suppose your late Minister to rise like SAMUEL from the dead. Suppose him to learn that some of you, his Parishioners, had begun to recollect yourselves; had resolved to pray, to turn to God, to embrace his Son, and to obey the Gospel;—nay that some of you were supposing that you even *do* serve God, because you begin to pay a formal attention to the externals of religion, and admit the general truths which he preached.

I ask, would he not say to such, like SAMUEL on another occasion, "Ye serve God! 'What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep of mine ears, and this lowing of the oxen that I hear?' What meaneth this frequent breaking of the Sabbath, by business or pleasure? What meaneth this chosen friendship with the enemies of truth?—this idolatry of the world?—this strangeness to the active servants of your Lord's house?—this slighting of his children?—this neglect of his only begotten Son? Ye serve God! How is it possible to serve God through such days of vanity and nights of carnal amusement? Can this be the service of that God, who loathes a mere lip service?—who cries, 'My son, give me thy heart?—Oh that thou, even thou at least in this thy day,' knewest the things 'that belong to thy peace!'"

But I should apologize for the bare supposition of such a return from the grave: for 'there the weary

are at rest:' as it is said in the Book of Wisdom, "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God. —In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die, but they are in peace.—Then shall the righteous stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him, and made no account of his labours. When they see it, they shall be troubled with terrible fear: and shall be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation; so far beyond all that they looked for; and in anguish of spirit shall say, This was he whom he had sometimes in derision, and a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honour; how is he numbered among the children of God, and his lot is among the saints."

Such a recall, therefore, of your late Minister to future labour on earth, is purely imaginary.—But, away with the phantoms of imagination, while certain realities demand our attention! I am bound to denounce a truth firmer than heaven or earth: I am bound to assert, that your late Minister SHALL return from the dust: not as a preacher, but as a *witness;* not as a warning voice, but as an unquestionable *evidence.* For 'the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, when all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble'—When these massy pillars shall give way!—When this temple shall be crushed in dust!—When these tombs shall be opened!—When these dead shall awake! 'Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.'

Then will your late faithful Minister present his testimony to his Lord and Judge, respecting the impenitent of his charge. He will declare, "Near thirty years I stood on my appointed watch in the parish of St. Mary Woolnoth. I knew no rule, but

thy word; and declared the message which thou gavest me. 'I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repented of his wickedness, saying. What have I done! Every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle.' I called unto them from my *pulpit:* I sent warnings and invitations to their *houses:* I exhorted them as a *friend:* I cried as a *watchman:* I entreated them as a *father, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?*—O my God, thou, that searchest the heart and triest the reins, THOU knowest this!"—May his parish also know it before THEY also follow him to the silent grave!

My dear fellow-citizens and fellow sinners, standing on the brink of an awful precipice! you *must* know, that to-morrow your cares, your sorrows, and your joys will be recollected but as a dream; and that the grand objects long presented to you from this pulpit will be then your only anxious concern. Remember, that the admonition before us respects not Ministers only. The conscience of every man before me is also addressed. The happiness or misery of every man is at stake. May God, of his infinite mercy, fix these considerations with a lasting impression on our hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake! To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

SERMON

ON

Lingering in Religion.

ON

LINGERING IN RELIGION

GENESIS, XIX, 16.

And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

It has been often asked, "Whence came evil?" Wise men, however, will see, after the fruitless pains that have been taken to solve the difficulty, that He, who alone could solve it, has not thought proper to gratify curiosity in this respect. On such subjects *He giveth no account of his matters.* Wise men, therefore, will rather attend to that which He has made plain, and declared to be important, than attempt to rend a veil which He has purposely drawn over his holy retirements.

A matter of fact plainly appears:—Sin *has* entered in the world, and misery follows sin. From revelation we learn the nature and extent of this evil, or its *reign unto death.* Our grand inquiry, therefore, now should be, not, "Whence *came* evil?" but, "What is the remedy for that evil, which is already *come?*"

Wise men will regard the entrance of evil, as a man views a fire already begun in his house: it is too late now to ask, "How came this?" or, "Where did the fire begin?" His single question will be, how he, and his family and property, can be secured?

But, amidst the devastation which sin is spreading in the world, there is one effect of it to which this Scripture should particularly direct your attention,

especially as it is not commonly noticed among men: I mean, its infatuating, blinding, and hardening effect. Most men mark sin in the drunkard, the debauchee, the injurious, or the profane; but who detects its slower, but not less fatal poison, in carnal security—that deadly opiate, by which, not only the sordid and sottish, but the sensible and scientific also, sleep *the sleep of death?* Yea, by which the Christian himself is strangely detained and confounded; and that, as we shall presently see, while he has a direct view of the most affecting prospects and consequences.

In this passage of Scripture, (which our Church has appointed as the Lesson for the day, in that season of the year when she calls her members to particular recollection and repentance) we are informed, that, after Abraham had interceded for Sodom, and Lot had admonished it both by his teaching and example, but in vain, two angels of God appeared, commissioned to destroy it. They beheld the outrageous abominations of the place, and found the measure of its iniquities now full. They said, therefore, to Lot —'Hast thou any here besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place. For we will destroy this place; because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.'

He did so. *Lot went out, and spake unto his sons-in-law, and said, Up, get ye out of this place!* But mark the infatuating effect of sin! they treated him as a dotard, or visionary. He urged danger, with every proof of its reality: he entreated them, no doubt, with the most lively emotions of terror and distress in his countenance: but *He seemed*, says the sacred historian, *as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law.*

Is this a singular case? Far from it. Let any one of us make the experiment: alas we have often made

it! Let a man speak feelingly of the evil of sin, of the necessity of repentance, of fleeing from the wrath to come to the only hope set before us; let him choose his company for this purpose, not from the dissipated, but from the decent, the sensible, the formally religious: let him watch his opportunity: let him select his expressions: still what, I say, does experience allow us to expect from such an attempt, but a fresh proof of that infatuation recorded in the history before us? They are, at first, alarmed—they conjecture—they are hurt—and, at length, they smile! The serious Christian 'seems as one that mocks.'

From such persons, we naturally turn to those who know and acknowledge the importance of truth, and the necessity of acting from its principles: yet what plausible reasons do even these, like Lot, urge for delay!

From these general remarks, however, I shall direct your attention to one, in particular, which the text before us will serve to illustrate.

LINGERING NATURE NEEDS THE HAND OF SPECIAL GRACE TO RESCUE IT FROM IMPENDING RUIN.

The case of Lot himself, more than even that of his sons, seems to illustrate this observation. He was not only warned from heaven, and urged to arise without delay; but he knew that the fire was ready to fall—that another minute might be fatal. The angels hastened him, saying, 'Arise! take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city.' Still he lingers:—'and, while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.'

He lingered—as if he had said, "A little longer—yet a little longer—to prepare for such a flight. Something, which I should take, will be left behind:

something which I might yet settle, will be left in confusion. I am in confusion myself. I faint at the undertaking. Consider what a violence I sustain, in leaving part of my family, and leaving them in such a state. A little longer, if it be only to make one more attempt to awaken their minds. Who can tell, but they will hear, and escape with me! At least let me say, once more, Farewell, for ever!"

'But, while he lingered, the men laid hold on his hand,' and brought him and his family abroad, 'saying, Escape for thy life! Look not behind thee! neither stay thou in all the plain! Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!'

This is, indeed, my dear hearers, a striking illustration of our remark: but, as I before hinted, is it an uncommon one? Verily we are but contemplating human nature: we are looking but at man! at ourselves! God is continually rousing us by his Word, by his Providence, and by his Spirit, to awake, to arise, and to escape for our lives; and we are ever finding some excuse or other for lingering.

Jesus said to a certain man, 'Follow me:' but 'he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father.' The pretence for lingering is often very plausible, when the principle is bad. Jesus, the judge of motives, said unto him, 'Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.'

Another said, 'Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go and bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.' Could any, but the Reader of Hearts, have called this man a lingerer? Yet 'Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'

Thus God calls to lingering nature; and, lingering nature constantly replies, with Lot, "'Oh not so, my Lord!' not so SOON—not so FAST—not so FAR. I cannot yet escape to the mountain: it is so distant: it

is so high. There is a little resting place at hand: 'Is it not a little one?' May I not rest there, 'and my soul yet live?'"

Lingering nature will trifle with the favours, as well as with the terrors of the Lord.

But why do I dwell so much on the case of Lot, or talk of human nature in general as a loiterer? Let us descend into our own bosoms, and examine the fact at home.

The consciences of most of us who are hear before God this day, bear testimony to the truths which we hear in this place. We have confessed that "we have erred and strayed like lost sheep"—that "we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts"—and that "there is no health in us." We also know, that nothing is more plainly declared in the Scripture which we profess to believe, than that, without 'repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' such sinners must perish eternally. We feel that the world is our grand snare, and that our time in it is short! how short we cannot tell? We know that there is no repentance in the grave; and that we cannot escape, if we neglect so great salvation. We have, perhaps, noticed the blessed effects of this salvation, in the lives and deaths of some of our friends; and in the misery and ruin into which unbelief has plunged others. 'Let me die the death of the righteous!' may have been our cry: Let me 'so run as to obtain.' Yes, indeed, many among us have felt these convictions: but who among us really lives the life of the righteous? Who actually runs the race set before him? Are there not many here present to-day, who, with such convictions, have not even yet SET OUT?

Say! am I speaking truth, or not? Though God has long invited us, has not one bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it, and therefore prays to be excused? Have not others bought oxen,

and must go to prove them? Has not a third married a wife, and therefore cannot come? why not? a family-man, of all others, stands most in need of the helps and comforts of religion: he, therefore, especially should come; and bring his wife with him. No! the lingerer cannot come: he cannot bear to have his new pleasures interrupted: he cannot disturb the feelings of a family, or of a new connection. If they will stay in the city, he must stay there too; if they will stop in the plain, he can go no further; at least, for the present, he *cannot* come.

Thus men live; intending, at one time or other, to be wise. And thus, too often, they 'die without wisdom.' We set a time: the day comes; but new hindrances also come with it, and we cannot go forth. Conscience meets a fresh alarm: but now, perhaps, we are depressed: our spirits are in no state for exertion: we are drowsy with labour; we are unhinged by vexation: we are embarrassed by a connection; or we are in doubt about the way, and cannot go on till the doubt is removed: somebody offers to remove it, but we beg to have it discussed at a more convenient season. What is all this? Alas! it is lingering nature, which, if the hand of special grace does not seize, will perish in sight of the most awful prospects, and drivel on to destruction, buoyed up with vain purposes never to be performed.

This, my dear hearers, is some account of lingering circumstances like ours; but it is not the *whole* account. I should be unfaithful to you, as your Minister, if I described it only as Folly or Infirmity. It is much more: it is 'the Deceitfulness of Sin: it is the Power of Unbelief; it is a Device of Satan: it is Sottish Idolatry:' it is Ruinous Presumption, which, in sight of such prospects as ours, still lingers, and objects to the means of an immediate escape, crying with Lot, 'Oh, not so, my Lord!'

Does this seem strange to any one? Does he ask

what he has to do with the case of Lot? what fire from heaven he need to fear? what warning he has neglected? I would ask such an one in return, Did you ever read your Bible? Is it not filled with awful warnings, addressed to the conscience of every one? Does it not threaten the impenitent and unbelieving with an infinitely more terrible destruction than that which threatened Lot? It was only his *body*, that was in danger—a body soon to be consumed by worms: but you are warned to fear, lest 'both body and soul' be 'cast into hell.' Lot was only in danger of having that family separated from him by an untimely death, which was soon to be separated by a natural one: but God hath warned you, that all 'those who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord;' and, of course, shall be banished from the endearing society of their pious relatives, of their faithful ministers, and of all holy and benevolent spirits.

Oh wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this lingering unto Death! Let us thank God, through Jesus Christ, that an arm of special grace is still stretched out to perform this: though with grief we must still cry, 'Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'

But the report *must* be made, and therefore we proceed to consider our dependence on the arm of the Lord.

The history of Lot's escape is but a picture of our deliverance by the power of grace. The angels had not only warned him, but they now hasten his escape: and, while he lingers, they lay hold of his hand, ('the Lord being merciful unto him') and bring him without the city. And even now they urge him onward; crying in his ears, 'Escape for thy life: look not behind thee: stay not in the plain: escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.'

Who does not observe here, divine grace extended like an arm from heaven, to pluck a brand from the burning? Who can avoid remarking, with St. Peter, on this very fact, that 'the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, while he reserve the unjust to be punished?'

The gracious arm was much more than that warning voice, which others had heard, as well as they who escaped. Methinks I see Lot resting in his cave, and thus instructing his daughters, while 'the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire'—"Behold, my dear children, 'the smoke of the country go up as the smoke of a furnace.' Where now are the mockers? I lingered, indeed, myself; but 'the Lord being merciful unto me,' he has brought us hither. Your poor mother looked back, and remains an awful monument in the plain. Let us never forget that we also are monuments, but monuments of another kind,—monuments of grace. Let us often visit the pillar of salt, to keep alive a holy fear in our heart; lest, after all, we perish by a worse destruction. And, while we cannot help dropping our tears at the sad memorial, let us return to our cave admiring and adoring that arm of special grace, which rescued us, while lingering in sight of impending ruin."

This temporal deliverance of Lot, may stand as an emblem of every true Christian's spiritual deliverance. The WORD of God is that warning voice, by which 'many are called:' The HOLY SPIRIT's influence is that mighty power, by which 'few are chosen.'

Do you say "This is strange?" I say it is a MIRACLE!—a miracle which God continues to work, or Ministers would labour in vain. And, considering its important consequences, it is the most glorious of his miracles. It was for this influence that St. Paul asked, when he prayed that the Ephesians might not only have 'the eyes of their understandings enlightened, to know the hope of Christ's calling,' but that they

'might also know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to those who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead.' He tells them, that it was by this power, that they had been 'quickened when dead in trespasses and sins;' and which had 'raised them up, and made them sit together in heavenly places in Christ:' and that they remained as 'God's workmanship,' and stood as monuments that, 'in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness toward them, through Christ Jesus.'

Here is MYSTERY too:—The answer, which our Lord gave to Nicodemus, is sufficient for us to give, when men put questions like his: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

Here, also, is MANIFOLD WISDOM: adapting various means to effect one grand design.

Sinking nature is ready enough to make vows in trouble, and sluggish nature is apt to forget them after deliverance. Thus Jacob had set up a pillar to the God who appeared for him at Bethel, and had vowed, that, when his present hopes were accomplished, he would remember his helper, on that very spot. The God of Bethel was faithful to his promise, and did far more for Jacob than he had asked; but Jacob forgot his vow, till he was roused long after with, 'Arise: go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee, when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.'

Moses, eminent as he was, was yet found among the lingerers, who need stimulating to duty. He was ordered to go forth and speak in God's name: but Moses said, 'Oh, my Lord I am not eloquent:' Divine Condescension at first reasoned with him:—'Who hath made man's mouth? Now therefore go, and I

will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say:' but Moses continuing still to object, Divine Wisdom then assumed a frown, and drove the lingerer on his way. Soon after this, even Moses loiters again: he neglects the divine appointment of circumcising his son: he had, doubtless, some plausible family reason for the delay; but 'the Lord met him by the way in which he went,' as with a drawn sword, and forced the parent to a performance of his duty.

Thus, to this very hour, is a Manifold Wisdom employed, in contriving means to drive or draw us on our way. Sometimes an alarming providence rouses the sleeper from his lethargy, as it did Jonah: sometimes a still small voice, after the storm, invites us to come out and meet the Lord, as it did Elijah: sometimes a friendly hint of encouragement carries us forward, as it did Jacob, trembling to enter Egypt, till heard it said, 'Fear not to go down, for I will go with thee: and sometimes the deadly snare into which one loitering, like David, is apt to fall, is made at once his scourge, his warning, and his cure.

Thus wisdom crieth aloud, in a variety of ways: and sendeth by a variety of messengers; each as an angel charged to exhort us, "'Up:—get ye out of this place:' this is not your rest." Sickness, losses, fears, disappointments, deaths,—what are these, but angels' hands taking hold of the lingerer ('the Lord being merciful' while he seems severe) bringing him forth, and crying,—'Escape for thy life: look not behind thee: neither stay thou in all the plain: escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed.'

Humbly as your Ministers ought to think of their attainments, they are bound to magnify their *office:* an office similar to that of the angels in the text. 'knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.' In order to be faithful, they must try by all means to rouse the lingerer. Their patience, indeed, will bear

with his peevishness: their love will accommodate, so far as it dares, to his prejudices: they will pity his worldly attachments, wait for his deliverance, and pray for his success. But in the mean time, they dare not cease to cry in the ears of the lingerer, 'Up, get ye out of this place.' Sometimes the message does little more than disturb men: they try to free their hand from the hand of him who would lead them from ruin; they promise to hear at a more convenient season: they demand time for moving: 'A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep.'

Hence we may account for many objections that are made to our labours. The sermon is too long, or too loud, or too harsh, or too personal: the language is coarse, and the application legal. In some cases, the charge may be just; but, more often, the truth is too plain and too pointed for such as would be at rest in their sins. Faithful addresses seldom please loiterers.

But, if the messenger be really in earnest to save himself and them that hear him, he will not cease to cry, 'Arise! take thy wife and thy children, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of this city.' He will not forget, at the same time, that his sole dependance for success in rescuing a single hearer, must be in the presence of a divine power. Without such aid, there is not one among those, who now

——"Walk
High in Salvation, and the climes of bliss"—

but would have lingered unto destruction in the city, or stood a pillar of salt on the plain.

Still it remains a melancholy matter of fact, that one class of our hearers continue to treat these truths as a fable. Another class are alarmed, and set out: but afterwards *look back*, and perish. A third class are fully resolved to proceed; yet sadly linger on the way. I shall, therefore, conclude this Discourse with a word to each of these classes of hearers.

1. Let me ask THOSE WHO TREAT THESE TRUTHS AS A FABLE, Do we appear mockers, because we attempt to rouse you from your fatal security, and charge you, on the authority of God's word, to *escape for your lives*?—Why is it?—ask your own hearts—why is it that these words seem to you now, as they once did to the sons of Lot, 'Like the words of one that mocketh?' Is it, because, instead of sending two or three witnesses, as he did to them, God hath sent a 'cloud of witnesses' to you?—Is it, because he hath set his seal to their testimony, while he writes folly and confusion upon all other attempts to enlighten and reform the world?—Is it, that he hath fulfilled a long chain of prophecy; and added thereto his wonders, signs, and mighty deeds?—Is it, that, in these last days, 'he hath spoken to us by his Son,' and striven with our consciences by his Spirit?

No! these are not your reasons—these are not the marks of 'a cunningly devised fable.' Men tremble when they *seriously* attend to the evidences of our faith. Some of us can speak from experience, who once sat with you 'in the chair of the scorner.' We can well remember, that, while company was present and vanity afloat, we could sport with the warning, and treat the messenger as a mocker; and, as well do we recollect with what difficulty the remonstrances of conscience were suppressed. Truth would force its way into our retirements, and bring a thundering charge into the conscience of the trembling liar, of 'Know thou, that, for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.'

You are young, perhaps; and some profligate writer or companion has injured your minds. Every age has been infested with such men; but it is the reproach of the present age that it swarms with them. Like the frogs of Pharaoh, they 'cover the land and smite all the borders of it:' they corrupt the streams of literature and conversation; and cause the land to stink, after they are dead.

The very character of these persons will help you to detect their design. 'Do men gather grapes of thorns?' Their spirit and conversation, their obstinacy and malignity, mark the class to which they belong.

Ask yourself, how you would expect that such men should treat that holy and humbling record, the Bible —that light in the night, which disturbs these robbers —that witness, which convicts them—that law, which condemns them, and calls for their execution—How would you expect such men as these to treat the Scriptures?

Suppose, for a moment, that you yourself became a truly religious man, what would the men of whom I have been speaking say of you? How would they treat your wise and pious resolutions? What construction would they put upon your hopes, your evidences, or your motives? You know, you *must* know, that what they dislike in the Bible they would dislike in *you*. They would begin to misrepresent, revile, and sneer: they would treat you as a fool, or a hypocrite. But would this form any solid objection to your real character?—Could it be called argument?—Could it be common sense? What then is the opposition which they make to the Scriptures?

To close this digression—if the unbeliever has genius, he will add brilliancy to his scorning: if he be a scholar, he will conjure up by metaphysics or criticism a lying spirit to deceive such as, like Ahab, wish to be deceived. And, if neither genius nor learning assist, he can at least new shape old objections, though these very objections have repeatedly received a satisfactory reply.

Well would it be, indeed, for those who are caught by such works, if they would reflect, that God also is executing *his* work; that 'the deceiver and the deceived are his;' and that the most awful judgment which he can inflict here, on such as 'receive not the

love of the truth,' is to 'send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.'

Still we seem 'as those that mock!' But, bear with me, Brethren, while I point out to you the *real* mocker. It is not the Minister, who watches for your souls, and would rouse you to action; but it is one, who, 'like a strong man armed,' would 'keep his house and goods in peace.' *He* is the mocker, who is still found repeating his ancient falsehood, 'Ye shall not surely die.' But, 'be not deceived: God is not' to be 'mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He, that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he, that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.'

Up, therefore, get ye out of this state. It is God, who calls *you* now, as He once did the sons of Lot. Had they attended to his warning, they would have been brought out by the same hand, which rescued their father. But they scorned the warning; and were therefore left without excuse. Such is your case. God hath sent you a message this morning: he hath promised his gracious assistance, if you ask it: and therefore leaves you without excuse, if you neglect it: and 'how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation!'

2. One only perished on the plain before Sodom: but I fear the number of those is not small, whose cases resemble hers. Such, then, AS ARE TEMPTED TO LOOK BACK, I address as a second class of hearers.

You, to whom I now speak, have, perhaps, not only long attended our ministry, but profess also to honour the Gospel which we preach. You are shocked to hear it despised, and lament that it should be so often misrepresented. "God forbid," say you, "that I should ever be found sitting with the scorner; that I should be negligent in ordinances, or erroneous in doctrines. I have seen the benefit of true religion in others; and have felt something of its power myself.

Its importance cannot be urged too strongly; for 'what would it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

Your experience goes, perhaps, still further than this. You could tell of your having joined prayers to your endeavours. You could speak of the conflicts which you have felt between sin and conscience;—of the efforts which you have made to break with the world, and escape to the mountain; that you actually set out; that you once outran others.

But say, how is it now? If you once ran well, has nothing hindered you? Are you not looking back to the city, whence you set out? Has not some temptation made real, vital, practical religion seem a task? Has not the love of this world left only the mere *form* of godliness, after it has eaten out the power of it?

How many—I speak it with sorrow—how many have I noticed, who, while puffed up with the change of OPINION, were yet careless about a change of *heart!*—eagar to follow a new preacher; but thoughtless of a new state of life!—ready to dispute about free-will or free-grace; but deplorably unmindful that 'the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.'

'But if, after men have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.' They have not only 'looked back,' but stand, as it were, already 'a pillar of salt' to the wise, and a stumbling-block to the foolish. May every one of you, my dear hearers, be delivered from so fatal an error! 'Look not behind thee.'

But, supposing that you are not thus looking back to the *city*, do you stay in the *plain?* that is, do you deem it sufficient that you have departed, in many respects, from the habits and maxims of a careless

and corrupt world? Do you rest in a decent, formal, traditional religion, like that of the Pharisee? satisfied with merely PROFITING ABOVE YOUR EQUALS—that you are regular in your devotions, consistent in your character, admired by many, and charitable to all? Do you boast of a good heart; though you have never yet been taught by the Spirit of God the guilt and deceitfulness of the heart, the spirituality of God's Law, the necessity of repentance, and the only hope of escaping by faith in Christ Jesus? Still worse, do you obstinately resolve to harbour no suspicion of being in danger? do you stand proudly determining to reject all admonition, respecting your state, whether from your Friend or Minister? Alas! you *stand* indeed: but you stand still: you stand on the plain. Whatever you have left in the city, you have not escaped to the mountain; I mean to that rest, rock, and hiding-place, which God hath pointed out for safety to perishing sinners. For 'he shall be for a sanctuary to' the believer; though for a 'stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence' to others. God grant that he may never prove such to any of you!

If, however, the words of the servant make but a slight impression upon your hearts, Oh may the express words of the Master be duly regarded, when, with reference to the danger of loiterers, he says, REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE!

3. I conclude with addressing the third class of persons, who ARE FULLY RESOLVED TO PROCEED, YET LINGER ON THE WAY. Who, indeed, among us all, lingers not? However sincere in our profession, however convinced in our judgments, however resolved in our determinations, however injured already by our delay, yet, who among us lingers not?

The preacher, I am sure, must plead guilty. The thought of standing up before such a congregation as this, is always accompanied with considerable weight on my spirits: but yesterday it was such, as led me to

say in my family, "I cannot make a sermon for to-morrow: I am too much depressed to attempt it. Besides, I have been turning the Bible over and over for a subject, and cannot find one. I must take some printed discourse: at any rate, I can make none; and their candour will admit of an apology."

Ah! lingering, lazy minister! read a printed sermon! make apologies for sloth! find no subject! What, no subject, when sinners are perishing around you: when faithful witnesses are so scarce, and false witnesses are labouring to root out all remembrance of truth from the earth! No subject! when thy dying breath will soon be in thy nostrils, and the door of thy opportunity soon be shut for ever!

Who does not join his confession to mine, and cry 'Oh wretched man!'

Thus admonished by truth and goaded by conscience we slowly make our way. Some of our hindrances are inevitable; but too many are *invited*,—are *purchased*,—are even *boasted* of, till, at length, our breath fails, and some one tells a neighbour, "*He is dead.*" "Dead!" replies the other: "I did not hear that he was sick! How did he die?" "Why 'careful about many things;' lingering as to the main thing: he had scarcely time left to set his House in order; God only knows how it was with his Heart."

If, however, as Christians, we thus meditate upon our weakness and danger, it is not that we may sink under discouragement, but that we may quicken our pace, and to bring forward and exalt our remedy—it is that we may 'exhort one another while it is called to-day, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin'—it is in order to our uniting in the cry, 'Awake, Awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!' With such views and means, we shall be able to say, with the Apostle, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.'

Nor let us stumble, as we are too apt, at the Provi-

dence which is often sent to fulfil a Promise. You, to whom I am speaking, certainly pray in Christ's name, that God would deliver you from this evil world—that he would not let you rest in sin—that he would bring you on your way to heaven; and that he would choose the proper means.

But, has he really heard thee; and, in very faithfulness, sent some messenger to deliver thee, but such an one as alarms thy fear? Fear not, it is but an Angel's arm stretched out to conduct thee onward; a voice crying, 'Escape for thy life.'

Recollect, that, whatever be the means, which God employs to break our idolatrous attachments, and bring us on the heavenly way, though others call it a loss or a disappointment, a disease or a death, let us call it an angel's hand—let us call it the voice of Christ, saying, 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous, therefore, and repent.'

'See, then, that ye refuse not him, that speaketh;' nor draw back from him, that layeth hold on thy hand, the 'Lord being merciful unto thee.' Rather, let us recollect, that though we linger, time lingers not—death lingers not—judgment lingers not! May every heart be lifted up to God this morning, that the arm of special grace may be stretched out to deliver us from a lingering spirit! Let us depart praying; and forming new resolutions to retire and seek that grace, which alone can seal the admonition of this day upon our hearts.

SERMON.

ON THE

Character of Hannah.

ON THE

CHARACTER OF HANNAH

1 Sam. i, 26, 27.

And she said, O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed: and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him.

True Religion, my dear hearers, is, while on earth, a heavenly plant in an unfriendly clime. It has to struggle with soil and season; and often meets a malignant blast that would bring immediate death to it, were it not for the care of the Husbandman. He watches and shields it, who will soon transplant it to a happier region, where it shall flourish for ever.

This plant is distinguished from such as bear some resemblance to it, by the root, the culture, and the fruit. In other words, by comparing what God teaches his children, with what he works in their hearts and produces in their lives, we come to learn what real religion *is*, and what it is *worth*.

In this view, the short memoirs recorded in the the Bible, become inestimable demonstrations of its principles. In them we see true religion embodied, alive and in action: we observe how it feels and speaks; how it first endures, and at length conquers: and we are thus enabled to distinguish it from those mere forms, farces and counterfeits, with which it is surrounded, and which seek to gain credit under its sacred name.

Should any one ask, "Where, after all, is the true religion?" we answer, it stands before us this day in

the character of the woman, 'who being dead yet speaketh' in the First Lesson of this Morning's Service.

Her husband had fallen into an error too common in those times: he had departed from the divine institution which makes of 'twain one flesh;' and had met the consequences of his sin in a distracted family. Hannah had no children; and was insulted by Penninah on that account, year by year, as she went up to the House of the Lord. Daily vexed and reproached by her adversary, she wept, and did not eat: her husband endeavoured to comfort her; but this was one of those many cases, in which God teaches his children, that he is their only portion and refuge.

She went up to worship with her husband; but she had a secret transaction with her God: she had griefs to pour into his bosom, where even an affectionate partner or faithful minister could not be admitted. Spiritual religion is an affair between God and the soul, that is principally transacted where no eye sees.

'She was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore;' and, as she continued praying before the Lord, Eli, the Priest, who sat near, marked the motion of her lips. He probably observed in her much agitation of spirit, but surely nothing that could excuse his rash judgment and groundless charge. Her meek reply, however, soon convinced him that she was indeed 'a woman of a sorrowful spirit, who was pouring out her soul before the Lord;' and he was influenced to say, 'Go in peace and the God of Israel grant thee' (or, as it should be rendered, *shall grant thee*) 'thy petition that thou hast asked of him.'

The occasional mistakes and infirmities of ministers do not destroy their authority. She passed by the infirmity of the Man, and believed the report of the Minister. She said, 'Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. And the

Lord remembered Hannah, and she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, because I have asked him of the Lord.' She afterwards went up with him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, and brought the child to Eli, and said, in the words of our text, 'O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me that petition which I asked of him.' She fulfilled her vow in returning the gift to him who gave it; uttering a grateful and joyful acknowledgment on the occasion, in testimony, that, however she prized the gift, she rested only in the Giver.

I shall pass by other truths contained in this subject, that I may direct your attention to the following remark:—

TRUE RELIGION IS A DIVINE LIFE IN THE SOUL, WHICH ITS AUTHOR FIRST TRIES, AND THEN HONOURS.

True religion, I say, is "the life of God in the soul of man." The Holy Scriptures continually employ images taken from the natural, to give us ideas of the spiritual and eternal world. We see a life in plants, and a life of a superior kind in animals: we see a life of a still higher order in rational creatures: but we are taught of God to seek a divine and spiritual life, to which the mere rational, though carried on to its highest point of improvement, can never attain. Much as we may admire celebrated geniuses of ancient or modern times, the Scriptures teach us, that while they continue in unbelief and destitute of the love of God, they are but SPLENDID WRETCHES, and *dead while they live*.

What then is that higher order of life, which may be called Divine?

I answer, it is a life of FAITH, by which a sinner, renouncing all other dependance, trusts alone in the full and free promises of his God.

It is a life of HOPE, by which, as with an anchor, he is kept sure, steadfast, and expectant amidst the storms of a disordered world.

It is also a life of LOVE, by which he is united to God as his portion, to his word, to his ways, and to his children; and by which he forgives and prays for his bitterest enemies. It is the mind of Christ, yea it is 'Christ in us the hope of glory,' and it is the foretaste of that glory itself. We may give laboured accounts, and employ the most striking images to convey ideas of this divine life, but the Author of it assures us, that, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' To fully understand Christianity, we must be Christians. To know what a natural life is, we must be alive; and rightly to conceive of spiritual life, we must possess it: and until men do possess it, they will go on mistaking, and probably despising it. Learned and sensible when conversing on other topics, this lies out of their observation and experience, as to its nature, its author, or its subjects: 'therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.'

But, however these things may be misunderstood, and of course reviled, 'Wisdom is justified of all her children.

One of these children of wisdom is presented this day to our observation.

Hannah had long mourned under a grievance, which seems to have been peculiarly felt in those times. 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness;' and we may recollect that some of the sharpest trials we ourselves have endured, could not be fully explained to others.

But how does she act under this? Does she, like many, who, if they are crossed, fall into murmurings against Providence, quarrel with the affliction, cast the blame on every body but themselves, and nurse a peevishness and impatience that God himself cannot

please? These are signs of spiritual death, but she had 'passed from death unto life:' she had the life of FAITH, which seemed to say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.' She sees the hand of God in her affliction; and she bows before it in the bitterness of her soul: she takes hold of it, yea she hangs upon it, by the life of HOPE. She is chastened by a father; but the life of LOVE in her flies to him as a father, and pours her soul into his bosom.

'Her adversary provoked her sore to make her fret.' That affliction is very heavy, which is not only within the house, but comes from a partner in it; yea which, tearing away the only pillow of repose, follows us into the Sanctuary *itself*. It is like that ingenious torment, which is said to be the greatest ever invented by man, of constantly preventing a wretch from sleep. Her adversary thus sorely provoked her: but do you read of her returning any provocation? 'Being reviled, she reviled not again:' when she 'suffered,' she 'threatened not, but committed herself to him that judgeth righteously.' Such as have 'put on Christ' by a divine life of faith, hope, and love, have 'put off the flesh, with its affections and lusts.'

We observe her thus ascending with her husband to worship. She was doubtless sensible of his piety, kindness, and sympathy; but, like a spiritual worshipper, her main business was with God Himself. Nothing less than real and personal communion with God will satisfy those 'who worship him in spirit and in truth,' and who mark his hand in all their affairs. Whatever respect they pay to the temple, services, and ministers of religion, their grand affair is with the 'God of all.'

We follow her into the temple, and behold her now falling before him 'who dwelt between the Cherubims.' The world is shut out; and here, in the solemn, silent, and secret place of the Most High, she talks to him

as one well known—she wrestles with him like Jacob —she seems to say, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me.' In the House of God, at the very 'gate of heaven,' surely there is repose for the weary soul. Alas! to stand on *this* side the gate of heaven, is not to be out of the reach of trouble.

'Eli, the Priest, sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord,' and was to be a further trial of the reality of the heavenly life which animated her soul.

Heavy, indeed, is the burden of that pilgrim whose guide is himself misled; and who, from negligence or mistake, adds to the weight which he should alleviate. Mere professors of religion will take occasion from defects in the ministry to revolt. They will hastily conclude, that, because the Priest is wrong, God and his ways are not right. A stumbling block is thrown in their way, at which they fall and are broken, though God had long warned them of it by his Prophet.*

But it is one of the privileges of that divine life of which we are speaking, that it is prepared to meet errors, by an inward and satisfactory experience of the truth. Hannah's trust was in God, not in Eli: she saw him in an error, but knew her Best Friend could not err. Accused, and probably shocked at such a charge as that which Eli brought, she neither forgot God, herself, or her minister; but, with deep humility and unfeigned reverence for his office, she puts forth the genuine fruits of that Spirit who had made her alive to God.

Eli said, 'How long wilt thou be drunken! Put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my Lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy handmaid for a daughter of Belial, for out

* Is. xxviii. 13.

of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.'

Grace so softens and sweetens the heart, that its genuine expressions under provocation often rise to a sublimity and tenderness, which make the language of poets and orators seem but vulgar and unmeaning artifice. It is not, however, my design to dwell on the beauty and pathos of her reply, but to exhibit 'those fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God,' and which demonstrate a heavenly life in the soul: those fruits, which, as our Church expresses it in her XIIth Article, "Spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit."

Happy, though afflicted woman! who could thus stand as a witness of the life of religion; while the sons of Eli were bringing a scandal upon it by their avarice and debauchery at the very altar; and while their pious father himself was negligent as a judge, and mistaking as a minister! Happy witness! who could turn from professors and profane, from trials in the house and scandals in the Church, and commit herself to him that judgeth righteously, with, 'Thou God seest me.—Thou knowest my sorrows.—Thou knowest that I love thee.—Put my tears in thy bottle.—Show me a token for good, that they that hate me may see it and be ashamed, for thou Lord hast holpen and comforted me.'

My dear hearers, this is religion. This is, indeed, that life of God in the soul, which he will first prove and then own. He proves its reality, by bringing it to the test. He improves its power by exercise, and teaches all his children to prepare for it. 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.' It is a part of a plan: it is a means to an end: it is a process that bespeaks present value and future ad-

vancement :—'Ye are now in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.'

This gold is tried by SATAN, who, as we learn from the cases of Job and Peter, is aiming to destroy what God means only to purify. Satan will seek to place such men as Hophni and Phineas at the altar, if it be but to distress and drive away from it such worshippers as Hannah.

The WORLD, is a fiery trial to a faithful heart: either vexing it, as it did Hannah's; or dividing it, as it did Elkana's.

The FLESH, called 'the old man with his affections and lusts,' is for a time permitted to try the reality of 'the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.' No fire is found by the believer more severe than this; leading him often to cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?'

The FAMILY is sometimes a fierce fire. Our family comprehends the greatest portion of our world: it is to us the most interesting, and therefore is capable of becoming the most trying, portion. The family is often our furnace: it has pains as necessarily secret as severe; and where they can be told, they are told in vain to any but God. Such was the family of Hannah.

But why do I stop at the family: we have just seen that the CHURCH itself is a fire, by which the faith and patience of its true members will be tried. It will try whether we, like Hannah, can honour the house and ordinances of God, while Hophni and Phineas are profaning it: whether we can acknowledge a true minister of God, and meekly bear with his infirmities, though, like *Eli*, he mistakes our case, and chills the heart which he should cherish: whether we can receive the promises of God from his mouth, though it some-

times speaks unadvisedly. The Church is a fire to try the Church.

Ignorance can see nothing but misery in such a process: and malice stands ready, like 'Penninah,' to insult and provoke the desolate. 'God hath forsaken her: persecute and take her, for there is none to deliver.'

But, 'understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise?' Doth he not sit by his gold as a refiner, while ye stand by it misconceiving or mocking?—Doth he not sit by it to watch over the furnace, to regulate the heat, to determine the time of of trial, and to bring his gold out of it 'seven times purified.'

A proof of this is before your eyes in the text. This woman 'out of weakness was made strong.' She looked beyond her difficulties, and wrought through them:—'perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.' She teaches us, as I said, what religion is, and what is its value.

We have thus seen true religion to be a divine life, and we have seen it tried. Let us, in the next place, observe it owned and honoured of him who gave it; 'for, them that honour God, he will honour.'

The servants of God, like Hannah, may have to pass through many trying dispensations to those 'good things which God hath prepared for them that love him;' but, though 'weeping may endure for a night, joy' will certainly come 'in the morning.' The night was past: the precious seed of faith, prayer, and patience had been sown weeping: and now the Lord removes the error from Eli's mind, and puts comfortable words into his mouth. 'Eli said, Go in peace, and the God of Israel shall grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.'

The life of faith can take comfort from a word, and rest a world upon a promise. God, who sent her a

token for good, enabled her to receive it, and to rest on it. 'And she said, Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.' Her affairs *without* the Sanctuary actually remained in the same state as before; but a transaction had passed *within* it, which placed them in a new point of view. The favourable aspect of God, gives a new aspect to every thing besides.

The time for God to honour the faith which he had tried, was now fully come. Hannah had left the temple, cheered and satisfied. 'And they rose early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned and came to their house—and the Lord remembered Hannah—and she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I asked him of the Lord.'

The Lord not only honours the work which he has proved, but he often does so 'beyond all that we can ask or think.' Hannah had asked for a *man-child;* but it was not in her contemplation to ask for a Samuel—that light of Israel—that Prophet mighty in word and deed before God—that blessing and pattern to the world in every age. She returns, in due time, with this child; and, in presenting him to *Eli* with a heart overflowing at the recollection of the place, time and circumstances of her trial, she says, "'O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition,' and to him I dedicate the gift for ever."

'They, that sow in tears, shall reap in joy;' and the testimony of such witnesses is the soul of history. Let us mark the state of her mind by its grateful acknowledgments.

She brought the child to *Eli*, and said, 'O my Lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying.' "You recollect," as if she had said, "a poor broken-hearted creature—drunk, indeed, with grief,

though not with wine. You saw me here reduced to the one help and hope of the comfortless. I am the woman whom you sent away with a word of encouragement, and here is the answer to my prayer: for this child I prayed; and I am come this day to give him up to that God, who is 'all my salvation and all my desire.' For, thankful as I am for the child, yet 'my heart rejoiceth in the Lord: there is none holy as the Lord; neither is there any Rock like our God.' I have been cruelly scorned and reproached, but 'talk no more so exceeding proudly: let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, by Him actions are weighed:' I stand a living witness to this truth. 'The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: He maketh poor and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up.' Surely I am a witness for God, that 'He will keep the feet of his saints:' for 'as for me my feet were almost gone, my steps had well nigh slipt:' but he led me with his hand, and quieted me in 'himself. The wicked may proudly boast, and the righteous for a time seem forsaken; but God 'abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.' Yet a 'little while, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail.' No: 'the adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces: out of heaven shall he thunder upon them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.' He shall give 'strength unto his King, and exalt the horn of his anointed'" (or Christ.)

Thus have we seen, my dear hearers, a divine life in the soul tried and honoured.

But am I to presume that all before me this day are, like Hannah, 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ,' and maintaining a communion with him in their sorrows and in their joys? Are not many of you, on the contrary, 'living without God in the world?' Let conscience speak; and let it be heard when it speaks. Does not conscience declare that

you live like men in general, without repentance? without faith in Christ? without that heart-felt religion and that secret prayer, which mark the character of those who are 'alive to God?' Compare the sorrows and the joys of this woman with your own. How do you need reproaches? How do you answer, when unjustly accused? Whither do you go in trouble? Is it to your Bible? Is it to your Saviour? or is it to some broken cistern of human power or carnal pleasure? Examine, I pray you: who are your chosen companions? what are your oracles? where are your expedients? Are they like those of this woman? Are they not the very reverse?

You may regularly attend the public worship of God: you may contend warmly for revealed truth: you may protest against the conduct of the ignorant and profane, and may appear religious at certain seasons. Thus, perhaps, *Penninah*, the adversary of *Hannah*, appeared. But beware of putting the mere picture of religion for the substance. If your friend is dead, you find it but a small comfort that you retain his picture. How wretched do you esteem the emigrant, who wanders over Europe with an assumed title, a star, or a plan of an estate; but who possesses neither rank nor property!

'Examine,' therefore, 'yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your ownselves: know ye not your ownselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?'

God is witness, and your own souls are witnesses, that you, whom I am now particularly addressing, 'have not the life of God within you.'

Brethren, his word declares, that to be 'carnally minded is death:' that 'the carnal mind is enmity against God:' that 'they that are in the flesh cannot please God:' and that 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.' And if none of his, whose are they?

Trouble is that dreary path, which every one, soon or late, must tread: but, to enter into it without a guide, to faint in it without a comforter, to meet death at the end without a prospect:—If any man, however gay or great, is reduced to this, 'I say that an untimely birth is better than he.'

What then must be the consequence of dying in such a state? What language must, at length, proceed from such lips? Will not one say, "I am the man, who once stood praying before the Lord; but the world kept possession of my heart: I talked of religion; but had none. I see, too late, that religion is a divine life, which I once despised, and have now lost for ever!"

Will not another reply, "I am the woman, who stood, not praying, but trifling before the Lord. I heard, indeed, the truth: I felt some convictions; but I lost them among the giddy. I recollected them in death; and now meet them in eternity, as 'the worm that dieth not?'"

May the Holy Spirit awaken you from such a fatal delirium, before it be too late. It is not too late, as yet. The ordinances of this day are the call of Christ to your hearts. He ceaseth not to complain, 'Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.' —'Turn ye, for why will ye die?' Lift your hearts to him in reply, "'Lord to whom shall we go, but unto thee?' Give us the life which thou requirest; and which, when tried, thou wilt bring forth as gold."

I turn to you, who need not to be informed that true religion is a divine life. You feel it to be something very distinct from the flighty speculations of some men, or the graver forms of others. You know what it is to take your cares, like *Hannah*, to one who careth for you. You have felt a sympathy with her, as we have passed on: for there is something common in the exercises and experience of every living branch in the True Vine.

I more particularly address those Younger Christians, who tell me that they faint in endeavouring to combat sensible evils with spiritual reflections:—that to bear up against and work through their difficulties merely by faith in a promise, is the greatest difficulty of all: and readily do we grant, that believing, which some think so very easy, is found by the real believer to be his hardest work.

But, first, CONSIDER THE NATURE OF YOUR PRESENT DISPENSATION.

'We walk by faith, and not by sight.' Observe 'the footsteps of the flock.' How did Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Hannah, and the rest of 'that cloud of witnesses' mentioned in Hebrews xi, make their way? Was it by faith, or sight? They advanced only on the ground of divine assurances; 'and they were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth.'

Do not, therefore, allow yourself even to wish for the by-path, which needs no faith, and presents no trials. Let it be enough for us, that we are passing through a dispensation to glory, through which our Master himself once passed, and through which all his Disciples follow him. It is experiment: it is exercise: it is education: which, though at the time not 'joyous but grievous, yet worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.'

When we object to his methods of advancement, we resemble our children, who would be learned, but would not go to school; or, when they go, would endure nothing there. We know how to answer *them:* let us learn thus to answer *ourselves.*

"Teach me," said a king once to a mathematician, "that art of yours which I so much admire. I would fain be a geometrician, but cannot think of passing through the ordinary paths of the science."—"Your majesty must be told," replied he, "that *there is no*

ROYAL *way* to geometry." Apply this to religion, and you will find but one consecrated, beaten track to glory, in which the scholar knows by BELIEVING, ascends by *humiliation*, and conquers by *suffering*.

Let me next remind you, to STUDY THE TEMPER OF YOUR MASTER.

If you would not stumble in his path, 'let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' As his death is the only atonement for our sins, and his Spirit the only life of our souls; so his lowly mind, his meek and suffering spirit, is alone adapted to the heavenward path. Hear his words:—'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' "Learn of me," as if he had said, "who when I 'was reviled, reviled not again: when I suffered, I threatened not, but committed' myself 'to him that judgeth righteously.'"

Our enemies oppress and vex us; but, well would it be, if, while we took up the burthen, we could, like *Hannah*, leave them to bear all the *guilt*. Let others try to lower standards and alter measures in Christianity, in order to cover their defects: let us keep the great pattern ever in sight, however we may come short of it.

Hannah is an instructive way-mark to believing women, under family trials. The woman, who can thus meet injuries and reproaches, while 'she trusts in God at all times, and pours out her heart before him,' has already obtained the victory over her worst enemy—SELF; and, like Hannah, shall soon see the rest 'silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail.'

Lastly, EXPECT GREAT THINGS, BUT EXPECT THEM IN PROGRESS.

'There is a time,' says the wise man, 'to every purpose under heaven.—Light is sown for the righte-

ous,' but appears not till its season. Think it not strange that the God of Order has appointed his best blessings to descend, when we are best prepared to receive them. In what a trying process did the faithful Hannah meet them! and, let me ask, are we so purified by our fire that *we* should expect them immediately?

We wait a little, and think it long. We limit 'the Holy One of Israel,' in the prosecution of an eternal purpose; and say, 'Let him hasten his work that we may see it:' forgetting that we are here but ephemera, insects of a day; while, with him, 'a thousand years are but as one day.'

'But, blessed are all they who wait for him:' who, like Hannah, follow him in the progress, and depend upon him for the issue. 'Who is among you, that walketh in darkness,' yet thus 'stayeth upon his God?' He will shortly enable you also to add, "O my Lord, I am the man who have passed through many a dark night and thorny path; a solitary weeping pilgrim. I am that woman who stood here praying: nature fainted, but underneath me were his everlasting arms: light was sowing for me while I sat in darkness, and arose in progress beyond my expectation.—I also am a witness, 'that the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation.'"

MISCELLANIES.

AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN

ATTENDING

THE SCHOOLS INSTITUTED AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

FOR

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

TO WHICH ARE SUBJOINED

THE REGULATIONS OF THE SAID SCHOOLS.

TO THE

PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN

WHO ATTEND THE SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

AT ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

WHEN our Lord put the question, 'What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?' he showed the infinite worth of that soul, and also the awful consequences of neglecting it.

To make this more plain, he has given us a book, showing us, in a variety of ways, that the soul, like the body, has its *wants*, *diseases*, and *death*, and also its means of recovery of spiritual *health*, and eternal *life*.

This recovery is compared in Scripture to the bringing of a lost sheep back again to the fold; or to one awaking from a deadly sleep to a lively hope: as it is written, 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light.

NOW RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION is one of God's appointed means for this relief and recovery of the soul of man; as he saith, 'Take fast hold of instruction: let it not go, keep it, for it is thy life.'

More particularly with respect to our children, He says, 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' And accordingly he charges us, 'In the morning to sow the seed of instruction, and in the evening not to withhold our hand, since we know not which shall prosper.'

'A brutish man knoweth not, and a fool doth not understand this' wisdom; and therefore despiseth it. But mark what honour the Lord putteth upon it, when

he saith, 'Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do? For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord.—Them, that honour me, I will honour.

And because religious instruction is God's usual method of delivering us from the *blindness* of ignorance and the *poison* of sin, He hath not only sent His Word, and promised His Spirit to them that ask Him; but he has also raised up Ministers and witnesses, from time to time, 'to open men's eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith, which is in Jesus.'

But that religious instruction which is needful at all times, is particularly needful in a day of rebuke and blasphemy, like the present. A sort of madness now abounds, that leads guilty, dying creatures, not only to ridicule and reject both the physicians and the remedies which God hath sent to heal them, but also to delight in spreading the pestilential disorder.

Now if some cruel wretch were contriving to give your child a dose of poison under the notion of a sweetmeat, could you rest till the child was informed of the danger, and secured against it? Or if the plague were to break out among us, would you be easy till the best remedies were administered to your family, and every thing tried for their safety.

What then are we to think of those who are so anxious to secure the *body* of a child which must soon turn to dust, and yet slight the means which God has appointed for the safety of its never-dying *soul?*

None will need to have these things urged upon their consciences the moment after they enter Eternity. But, few consider enough how much, even in the *present* world, the comfort of the parent depends upon the religious instruction of his child.

How many, who have sowed the seed of religious

instruction, are reaping the fruits of their labours in the piety, affection, and prosperity of their children! On the other hand what fruitless complaining and bewailing is often heard, over a profligate son, or a ruined daughter! And what bitter reflections must follow in the mind of those parents, who trace this ruin to their own neglect?

'I will judge,' said the Lord, 'the House of Eli for ever, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.'

Consider the advantages of preparing your children against the time when they must leave you, to struggle with a dangerous world. Good principles form a suit of *armour*. They are also a *recommendation*; for who would not prefer a servant, or a partner, who has been brought up in the fear of God and the knowledge of his duty, to one who has been left to run wild, neither fearing God nor regarding man?

Consider, also, if they should be taken from you by death, how painful will be the reflection, if they meet it in ignorance and unbelief, through your neglect! On the contrary, what a consolation it will be in parting with them, if, through God's blessing on your religious instructions, you have ground to hope that they are gone to Him.

Now, when to these considerations you add, that youth is the spring-time to plant good principles, before bad ones take root; and how much easier it is to prevent evils than to cure them; we trust that those, who have a *real* regard to the honour of God—to the souls and bodies of their children—and to their own future peace and comfort, will embrace and further the pious design of their friends, whose only object, in their expense and labour, is to make you and your children happy in time and in eternity.

To attain this end, we would begin by setting before your children their fallen and depraved state by nature; and the root of those evil tempers and prac-

tices, by which they so dishonour God, distress you, and plunge themselves in destruction. We would teach them the nature of right and wrong, from the only infallible standard, God's holy law: a law, 'by which every mouth must be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God.'

After showing them their ruin by sin, we would teach them their remedy in the Gospel: setting before them the necessity of 'repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' the merit of his blood; the influence of his Spirit; and the obligations to a holy life and conversation.

But, while we, as their *friends*, are using our endeavours, how much stronger reasons have you, as their *parents*, to join us in bringing them, as you are able, to the knowledge of God and themselves!—leading your little ones (like those mentioned in the gospel, Mark x, 13,) by faith and prayer to Christ, that He may take them into His arms and bless them.

There are, indeed, parents so vain and unthinking, that they would be better pleased if their children were presented with baubles, articles of dress, money, &c. than with good books and religious instruction. On the contrary, your friends have far nobler views: they are seeking to adorn and enrich your children with those substantial benefits, which can never be taken away from them.

You have already given good reason to hope that this also is your wish, from the great number of children who attend, and seem desirous of improvement in the best knowledge; and this hope will be greatly increased in proportion as you regard the following advice:

1. Show them the nature and excellency of our design.

2. Strictly enjoin them to be exact in attending at the appointed times, and to be attentive to the instructions given them.

3. Give them admonitions and directions at home, as to their behaviour in church, and in going thither and returning.

4. Encourage them to learn at home what they will be expected to repeat at church; and inquire at home what they have heard at church, and explain to them what may be too difficult for their present capacity.

5. Keep them, by all means in your power, from loose and vicious books and companions; and endeavour to correct evil dispositions, before they take root and resist all your efforts.

6. Frequently explain to them, and enforce upon their consciences, their ruined state by nature and practice—their redemption through Jesus Christ—and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's influence to make them see and feel these truths.

7. Enjoin upon them regularity in private prayer, and in reading the Word of God.

8. Pray for a blessing on your and our endeavours: 'for neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase.'

9. Be watchful over your own conduct, that your example may not counteract our instructions.

10. Despair of nothing in a right way, and with the Divine blessing: 'Be not weary in well doing: for, in due season, ye shall reap, if ye faint not.'

REGULATIONS OF THE SCHOOLS*

INSTITUTED AT

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

1798.

GENERAL RULES.

I. The *Support* of these Schools is by Annual Sermons only.

II. The *Instruction* of the scholars is committed to such Gentlemen and Ladies, usually attending this Chapel, as are approved of by the Ministers, and are nominated by them to be Superintendants of the scholars; which Superintendants are assisted by a Master and Mistress.

III. The *Government* of the Schools is vested in the Ministers, Chapel Wardens, and Gentlemen Superintendants; who hold a Meeting at the Vestry, the last Tuesday evening in every month, to regulate all matters connected therewith.

IV. The children who apply for admission must

* These Regulations are here added, for the information of such persons as may wish to establish similar schools: though they were not drawn up by Mr. Cecil, yet they were submitted to his revision, and received his sanction. The Schools at St. John's Chapel contain, on the average, from 120 to 150 children; for whose accommodation the congregation erected two long galleries above the north and south galleries of the Chapel, one for either sex.

J. P.

be able to read; and those are preferred, whose parents, or nearest relatives, usually attend this Chapel.

V. Children are admitted into the Schools at those Monthly meetings held on the last Tuesday in March, June, September, and December.

VI. An Annual Sermon is preached to the scholars on May-day; after which a Meeting is held of the Ministers, Chapel Wardens, and Superintendants, when books are given to the scholars of a value proportioned to their good behaviour during the year, and adapted to their age and capacity.

VII. Besides these Annual Rewards, other Rewards in books are given in February, August, and November, to the most meritorious Scholar in each class, such Scholar to be ascertained by the Report of the Superintendant to the Committee, at their preceding Monthly Meeting. Cheap Repository, and other small Tracts, are also provided annually for each Superintendant, to be given discretionally, as occasional rewards, among the deserving scholars. As the Children pass through the schools, they are furnished with proper Catechisms, and a Prayer Book, and, if they behave well and improve, with a Psalm Book, and a Bible; and, when they leave the schools, if they do it with credit to themselves, a larger Prayer Book and Bible are presented to them.

RULES FOR THE SUPERINTENDANTS.

I. They engage to attend every Sunday morning punctually at ten o'clock; or, in case of unavoidable absence, either to provide a proper Substitute for that morning, or to send notice the day before to the Messenger, that such a substitute may be provided in due time.

II. They are requested to bring forward the scholars committed to their care, according to the age

and capacity of such scholars, in the following system of Religious Instruction:—The Collects for the day, the Texts of the Sermons heard on the preceding Sunday: Dr. Watts' Divine Songs for Children: the Church Catechism: the Church Catechism broken into short Questions: and Stillingfleet's Explanation of the Church Catechism—and they are further desired to explain to the scholars, and impress upon them, the Truths of Christianity.

III. They are to inquire after the due attendance of the scholars on the preceding Sunday, by examining the printed Ticket of Attendance given by the Master or Mistress; and, if satisfactory, and they have attended that morning in due time, and repeated their lessons well, then the Superintendants are to give a printed Certificate of Approbation.

IV. The Superintendants are desired to propose Psalm Books and Bibles to those scholars who may not have received them, as rewards for their diligence; and to make a report in writing to every Monthly Meeting, of such scholars as have merited them. They are further desired to engage the attention and diligence, of the scholars by occasional presents of Cheap Repository and other small Tracts, a proper selection of which will be annually delivered to each Superintendant for that purpose.

V. They are empowered to suspend any scholar, for misdemeanors, from all connection with the Schools, till the next Monthly Meeting; to which they are to report the cause of such suspension; when the case is to be heard and determined.

VI. They are desired to begin with the scholars punctually at ten o'clock, and to leave them at ten minutes before eleven.

VII. When any scholar is absent two Sundays together, without a satisfactory reason being assigned, the Superintendant is requested to send the Messenger to inquire the occasion of such absence.

RULES FOR THE MASTER AND MISTRESS.

I. They are to instruct all such children as are not classed under any of the Superintendants; and they have the same powers and duties with regard to such children, as are assigned to the Superintendants over theirs.

II. They are to collect the scholars together; to keep accurate lists of them; to regulate their behaviour during Divine Service; and to deliver to them Tickets for their attendance at each Service, if they behave well.

III. They may suspend any scholar for misconduct, after the school hours, reporting the cause of such suspension to the next Monthly Meeting.

IV. They are to employ such persons, with the approbation of any Monthly Meeting, as may be found requisite to assist in keeping perfect order and silence in the scholars' galleries, during Divine Service.

V. They are to be at the Chapel a quarter of an hour before ten every Sunday morning, and a quarter of an hour before service begins in the afternoon and evening.

VI. They are to collect at Midsummer, Michaelmas, Christmas, and Lady-day, all the Tickets of Approbation then in possession of each scholar, and return a certificate of the number; such certificate to be delivered by the scholar to the Superintendant, previous to the report by the Superintendant to the Committee for the rewards of May-day.

RULES FOR THE PARENTS.

I. The children are to be brought for admission by their parents or friends; and no child is to be ad-

mitted, unless such parents or friends will engage for their good behaviour and punctual attendance.

II. Notice of the indisposition, or absence from town, of any scholar, is to be given by the parents or friends, to the Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress, that it may be reported to the Superintendant of such scholar's class.

III. As each scholar who attends and behaves well will have a TICKET OF APPROBATION in the Morning, and other Tickets certifying due attendance on each part of Divine Service; the Parents are particularly requested to call for a production of such Tickets immediately after each Service, the want of which will be occasioned only by absence from Church or ILL-BEHAVIOUR THERE.

IV. When a scholar has been suspended for misdemeanors, the parents or friends are to have notice of the cause, and are expected to accompany such scholar to the next Monthly Meeting, when the matter will be considered and determined.

V. They are expected to give notice to the Monthly Meeting when any scholar is to leave the schools.

RULES FOR THE SCHOLARS.

I. Each scholar is to attend Divine Service every Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening, unless a sufficient reason can be given for absence.

II. All are to be in their proper places before ten every Sunday morning, and before the bell shall cease to ring in the afternoon and evening.

III. Silence and reverence must be observed every moment they are in the House of GOD. There must be no whispering, talking, nor disturbance of any kind. Every little noise in the scholar's gallery disturbs the congregation in the gallery below. The first offence is punished by the forfeiture of all the tickets of ap-

probation which the scholar may have then received. The second offence is punished by expulsion from the schools.

IV. Each scholar is expected to come straight from home to the chapel, and to go directly home after Divine Service is ended, with quietness and good behaviour. All playing and rudeness in the streets on a Sunday is disgraceful and sinful. The first offence is punished by the forfeiture of all the tickets of approbation which the scholar may have then received, and for the second offence the punishment is expulsion.

V. Boys and girls are never to be seen walking together on a Sunday to or from the Chapel.

VI. They are expected to pay cheerful and constant obedience to the Superintendants, Master and Mistress, and such persons as the Master and Mistress may appoint to assist in keeping order and silence in their galleries.

AN

Address to the Children

ATTENDING THE

SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION,

AT

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW,

OCCASIONED BY THE

HAPPY DEATH OF ONE OF THEIR SCHOOLFELLOWS.

Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes....MATT. xi, 25.

A

Familiar Address,

&c. &c.

DEAR CHILDREN:

Your friends lately set up a school for your religious instruction: and, as they would do you good in any way, and by every method they can think of, they desire now to put another tract into your hands. It is a short account of one of your schoolfellows. It will show you the benefit of religious instruction, as well as the blessing which God has already given to the endeavours of your friends. Above all, we publish it with a hope that it will encourage you to be followers of one of your number, who has lately 'through faith and patience inherited the promises.'

This little boy (whom most of you knew) was the son of Mr. James Watt, of Eyre Street; whose office it is to go continually round the chapel, to see that strangers are seated whenever there is room.

Mr. Watt has been desired to give some account of his child. and he writes as follows.—"I became a hearer at St. John's Chapel about eight years ago, and took my son, then not five years old, with me." Observe here dear children, that a parent taking his child to God's house, puts him in the way of God's blessing, for, 'them that honour him, he will honour;' 1 Sam. ii, 30.

Mr. Watt goes on to say, "I was soon surprised at the quickness with which he found out the different parts of the Church Service: he would stand on a

seat in the aisle by my side, and join me in singing praises to God." Don't you see here, that, if some children are idle, inattentive, and disorderly at church, it is not because they CANNOT join in the worship with their parents, and profit by the service, but because they are wicked? Pray consider this, lest you provoke God on the very day, and in the very church which he hath appointed to prepare you for his church above,—and lest, in the Day of Judgment this child should be a witness against you.

But let us go on with Mr. Watt's account. "Some time after, several children who stood about the Chapel were collected together, among whom was my son: they used to attend at the house of Mr. ——, to repeat the Scriptures and Hymns which he set them. My son met with encouragement there, both from Mr. and Mrs. ——, who separately bestowed books upon him; and once, when he had received more books than others, my son told me that Mr.—— desired them 'not to fall out by the way.'

"Soon after this the School for Religious Instruction was most happily instituted, by which he obtained help from the different superintendants; but, being more immediately under Mr.——, I must beg to refer to him, as well as to the other gentleman, for the observations they made on his conduct; and also to Mr. Mathews, the schoolmaster, as to his behaviour during the time of Divine service."

From these gentlemen, and from Mr. Mathews, we learn that William Watt was of a sickly habit, but had a strong memory—That his great attention to instruction encouraged those who taught him, and naturally drew their attention to him in return. The physician found him reading his Bible whenever he visited him; and never heard him utter a murmur under his sufferings.

"At home," says Mr. Watt, "he was pious, dutiful, and obedient; chiefly employed in reading his Bible,

the Pilgrim's Progress, (of which he was very fond) and other religious books. He often explained what he read, in a manner that surprised us. He seldom mixed in play; and when invited to a schoolfellow's house, I have been told he has left his playfellows for the parlour and a book. What is remarkable in a boy of his age, he had not at the time of his death, a single plaything. His books he desired to be given to his brother, and to four other boys belonging to the school; and to all of them (as I shall have occasion to mention again) he left a charge that they should 'prepare to meet their God.'"

This is not put down as if there was any harm in a child's having a few playthings: but to show you that while even OLD people will have their playthings and amusements, for want of a heart towards something better; so, on the contrary, the heart of a child may be so renewed and exalted by divine grace, as very early to 'put away childish things.'

"I will mention," says Mr. Watt, "only one out of many other instances of his dutiful affection for his mother, who, being unwell one night when he was in bed, he offered to rise and go out for any thing she might want that might do her good. To try him she desired he would; on which he immediately arose and dressed himself. He strictly observed the truth; and always spoke to us in a thankful and obliging manner. When I conversed with him on religion, he listened with reverence, and would make happy observations thereon. In company, he was reserved, yet would readily sing a hymn if requested."

We have never observed a child, which, like this, was dutiful to his parents, upon whom God did not set some mark of his approbation. 'Honour thy father and thy mother, is the first commandment with promise:' Eph. vi, 2. And, if God spares your lives, Dear Children, you may also observe how often he sets a black mark upon such as have been undutiful.

His father goes on to write, "In a former illness in which we thought we should lose him, he said many comfortable things: he was much engaged with the Scriptures, and in prayer. I have no doubt but the instruction that he received from Mr. ——— and the other gentlemen, together with the sanctified affliction which he underwent, were the grand means of his being brought to the knowledge of 'the truth as it is in Jesus.'

"I will now come to the close of his life. On the morning of Sunday the 26th of October, he hastened to be in time at the Chapel; and, though he had an umbrella, he got wet. He went through the Scriptures appointed him to learn; and then came to me, informing me that his clothes were wet. I bid him mention it to Mr. Mathews, the schoolmaster, who immediately gave him leave to go home: he returned, had his clothes changed, and continued at home the remainder of the day, reading the Book of Martyrs. His breath, however, began to fail: we therefore found it necessary again to call for the assistance of Dr. ———, who, much to his honour, has displayed a truly Christian benevolence in his kind offices and ready attention to my children, which I shall ever regard with gratitude.

"The dear boy, however, grew worse; and awaking after a short sleep, he said to his mother, 'I never was sure I should die before, but now I am sure I shall die, and go to heaven.' He begged her to forgive him all he had done amiss; and, after a pause, he said, 'God hath forgiven me all my sins.'

"I came into the room at this time, when he said to me, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' He went on, saying, 'The Lord is our shepherd: we shall not want. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly—Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"

Here you see, dear children, what true faith does. It brings a burden of guilt and sorrow to Christ the Saviour: it takes Him for its teacher—trusts his word—depends on his power—is satisfied with his favour—endeavours to obey his will—and confesses him before men. And, that the Holy Spirit can make A YOUNG CHILD such a true believer, as well as its parent, you plainly see in the case before you. We could also tell you of many other such instances, if it were necessary.

"On my asking him," continues Mr. Watt, "whether it was not a great mercy that he had such Scriptures, he said, 'I feel great comfort from them;' and then said, 'Prepare to meet your God.' On asking him whether he was not thankful for the instruction which he had received at St. John's Chapel, he said. 'Tell Mr. ———, I thank him for teaching me.' Afterward he said, 'I feel comfortable: I think I shall go to heaven.' On my asking him, what I should tell the boys at St. John's, he said, 'Tell them to prepare to meet their God; and tell them that I said so.'

"Seeing his mother shed tears, he requested me to tell her how Abraham offered up his son Isaac; and not to grieve." Observe, dear children, that your schoolfellow (like young Timothy*) knew, while a child, the Holy Scriptures, which were 'able to make HIM' also 'wise to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.' God made this child not only a comfort to his mother, but a comforter; and thus, 'out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he perfects praise.'

"Looking at his brother," says Mr. Watt, "he said, 'Jem, you would be happy to be in my state, but prepare to meet your God.' He now grew worse; and was greatly convulsed during the night, and departed the next day in perfect ease, (Friday, the 2d

* 2 Tim. iii, 15.

of November, 1800,) aged twelve years and nine months."

Having given you, dear children, this account of one of your schoolfellows, we wish to add two or three remarks for your use.

1. This case is sent you for INSTRUCTION. You hear accounts of true religion continually; but here you see it. In this little boy you see what your Bible means, by being 'born again'—a 'new heart'—a 'lively faith'—a 'hope full of glory.'

You see, also, the fruits which they bear, who are truly religious; that is, are united by faith to the tree of life, Jesus Christ. This child not only loved God, and his Word, and his Church: but he was a blessing, a comfort, yea a comforter to his parents, and an example to all. Nor is true religion that gloomy, uncomfortable thing, which some children foolishly suppose. You see the contrary in your schoolfellow. He was happy and thankful in life—happy in death—and is gone to be happier than I can tell you, for ever. 'For goodliness is profitable for all things; having the promise of the life that now is,' so far as there is any thing good in it; and the promise 'of the life that is to come,' in which there is nothing but good: 1 Tim. iv, 8.

2. This case will afford you ADMONITION, that is, warning and caution. You see how early children may be called away by death: and, therefore, our Lord says to all, young as well as old, 'Be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh;' and when He cometh, we are told the small as well as great must stand before him in judgment: Rev. xx, 12. To be ready when the Judge shall come, was the grand concern of this child: he pressed this upon all around him: he begged his father to charge you to 'prepare to meet your God,' and to say this expressly from HIM. We pray you to consider how awful a witness he will be against

you in that great day, if you continue in a careless state. Godly children will then be witnesses against other children. God, in having servants of all ages and in all stations, will leave others of all ages and stations without excuse. If therefore you are tempted to sin with ungodly children—so as to tell untruths—to break the sabbath—to slight instruction—to disobey your parents, and to wish to break loose from their restraints that you may follow the course of this world: Oh beware, lest God in judgment to you should say, "Let that wicked child take its course. I will give him up to his heart's lusts. He shall go on his way to destruction!" 'For the day shall come that shall burn as an oven, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble. But, to such as fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings:' Mal. iv, 2.

3. The case of this child offers ENCOURAGEMENT to children. God has put it into the hearts of your parents and friends to bring you to the House of God for instruction, and He has put it into the hearts of others to instruct you there. They would, with his blessing, take you by the hand and guide you from that 'broad way which leads to destruction,' into the 'narrow path which leads to everlasting life.' They will feel well rewarded for all their pains and expense in bringing, if but one of you, into the right way. They know one soul is of more worth than a whole world. You are shown, in the success that has attended their labours with this little boy, what they would do for YOU.

Watch, therefore, against the temptation of Satan, of a wicked world, and of a deceitful heart, which would discourage you, and tell you that you are but a child, and cannot yet seek God: know and trust in Christ; and be truly religious. This account proves how well a young child may, by divine grace, enter God's ways, and prepare to meet Him. This child

was born with the same corrupt nature as yourselves: yet, by the help of his God, he turned out of the course of this world, and took the same path as Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and others of the saints of God. Like the child Samuel, he early knew and served the Lord 'in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom he shone as a light in the world.' He owned his God, and his God owned him, and blessed him in life and in death.

It should also afford great encouragement to you, Dear Children, that God has set his mark of approbation on this our endeavour in setting up a school for you. He has said, 'they that seek me early, shall find me;' Prov. viii. 17, and he has fulfilled this promise before our eyes in this little boy. We see Jesus still taking young children into the arms of his love and blessing them. Take encouragement from this, and call upon him with Jabez, 1 Chron. iv, 9, 10, "'Oh, thou that wouldest bless me indeed, that thine hand may be with ME, that thou wouldest keep ME' from evil, as thou didst my late schoolfellow, that, with him I may finally inherit thine everlasting kingdom. through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen."

EARLY PIETY RECOMMENDED

IN A

DISCOURSE,

ADDRESSED TO

THE SCHOOLS FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION,

AT

ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL, BEDFORD ROW.

MAY 1, 1802.

Those that seek me early shall find me....PROV. viii, 17.

PUBLISHED FOR THE USE OF THE SCHOOLS, AT THE REQUEST OF THE SUPERINTENDANTS.

TO THE CHILDREN OF THE SCHOOLS OF ST. JOHN'S CHAPEL.

YOUR kind friends, who superintend your Schools, ever watchful for your best interests, have requested me to print for your use the substance of the Discourse which was delivered to you last May-Day. Though it was not intended by me for publication, yet, submitting to their judgment, and desirous of promoting your welfare by all means, and also that of other young persons who attend your Anniversary, I readily comply with their wishes, and remain

Your affectionate Minister,

R. CECIL.

May 7, 1802

A

DISCOURSE.

&c.

ECCLESIASTES, XII, 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

My dear children, this discourse is particularly addressed to you.—Our 'hearts desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved.' We cannot but recollect the errors and snares of our own childhood: we admire and adore the Hand of God, by which alone we escaped: we bless him for timely help afforded us by *our* friends: and, in turn, we would now assist *you*. Oh! that *your* prayers and endeavours may join ours, and that the divine blessing may rest upon us both, while we call you to 'remember your Creator in the days of your youth!'

The Wise Man concludes a variety of instruction with an Admonition to youth; and, in order to your more clearly perceiving the meaning and importance of it, I proceed to state,

I. How, you are called to remember your CREATOR.

II. WHEN, you should specially remember Him: 'In the days of THY YOUTH.'

III. WHY, such remembrance should not be deferred: because 'evil days come, and years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.'

I. Consider HOW, you should remember your CREATOR.

Begin by remembering WHO HE IS. I assure you, we, your Ministers, must come to the Bible as our only guide, to know any thing of this grand truth: and *there* we find our Creator to be that same and only God, into whose Name ye were baptized; namely, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST; three persons, but one GOD. Any other notion of God is but a creature of the imagination; and to worship such a creature, is to worship an Idol.

Then, you should remember your Creator as to WHAT HE HAS DONE.

For 'all we, like sheep, have gone astray.' You have heard of wicked persons, who, by toys and promises, entice silly Children from their Parents' door: and, after carrying them to a distant spot in some wood or cellar, there strip them, and sometimes murder them. It is thus that Sin and Satan deceive and ruin us; and thus, robbed of every good, we must have perished in our lost state and condition, if 'God' had not 'so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This, Dear Children, is your only hope, as well as mine. We can now come to God the FATHER, through the complete atonement of God the SON, and by the assistance of God the HOLY GHOST. And consider, after what God has thus DONE, 'how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

Again: you should remember your Creator as to WHAT HE IS DOING.

He is not only your Creator and Governor, but also your *Friend*. He is raising up Ministers to instruct you. He is sending you invitations and messages of grace. He is sending a word to you by his minister at this time. He not only affords you the common help and care of your Parents, but disposes kind friends in this place to instruct you in his ways and ordinances, and thus to lead you to Himself. Remember, there-

fore, your Creator, in these his means of Grace. Remember him by prayer, reading his word, and constantly attending his house. 'Thou meetest those,' saith the Prophet, 'that remember thee in thy ways.' Particularly watch against sabbath-breaking, the neglect of God's house, or inattention to its services while you are in it: for this is not only to forget Him, who is present, and who hath said, 'In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and will bless thee;' but it is a despising of both the means of Grace and the hope of Glory.

Remember also your Creator as to what HE HAS PROMISED TO DO.

For 'the Lord is a Sun and Shield: He will give Grace and Glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. Ho! every one that thirsteth,' saith He, 'come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money.' "Come, poor and unworthy as you are," as if God should say, "and I will give you my best blessings:—blessings, which will cheer like Wine, and nourish like Milk. As the King of Heaven, I will give beyond all you can ask, or even think; and among these blessings I will give a *new heart* and a *right spirit* to employ and enjoy them." But remember, my Dear Children, that you must *pray* for these blessings: because they are freely promised to such as ask; but not to such as prove they despise them, by asking them *not*.

Lastly, remember your Creator as to what HE HATH DETERMINED TO DO.

He will be your *Judge*. There is not one of us but must stand before his bar; and who *then* will not feel the importance of remembering his Creator while life was granted? For the youngest Child that reads his Bible, and learns to call things by the names that God calls them, and treats them as he treats them, such a child, I say, is already become truly wise, and shall be everlastingly happy. On the contrary, if a man be

never so noble, or learned, or rich, yet if he does not regard what God has promised, and what he has threatened, he is but a fool in *God's* sight now, and must soon be so in his *own* sight for ever.

There was a man once, who, because he was rich, clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, cared for none of these things which I have been speaking of. He did *not* remember his Creator: but he, that said, 'the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that FORGET God,' soon sent him thither; and, when he 'lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments,' and there complained of his misery, it was said to him, "Son, REMEMBER."

Such a state is enough to make one tremble; and loudly speaks the importance of the text. Indeed all the wisdom of this world cannot furnish you with so perfect a maxim as that in your Bible;—'trust in the Lord with all thy heart, and lean not to thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him'—"Acknowledge," as one expresses it, "his *Word*, by consulting it: his *Providence*, by observing it; his *Wisdom*, by admiring it; his *Sovereignty*, by acquiescing in it; his *Faithfulness*, by relying on it; and his *Kindness*, by being thankful for it:" 'and he shall direct thy paths.'

But, in the text, there is particular mention made of the season.

II. WHEN, YOUR CREATOR SHOULD SPECIALLY BE REMEMBERED: namely, 'in the days of thy YOUTH.'

First, because Youth is the time when we are MOST CAPABLE OF RECEIVING IMPRESSIONS and forming right habits and dispositions.

You have seen a young shoot in a garden.—How easily at first can it be bent and trained! But, let it grow to an old tree, and it becomes hard, stubborn, and untractable. Thus Youth is the season of growth and motion: allow me to call it the 'May-day of

Man.'—If you go abroad on this day, you will see life putting itself forth in a thousand forms in the gardens and fields around you: it is also from these present appearances that we form our hopes of the Autumn. So, in youth, if the mind be not cultivated, and do not put forth blossoms of hope, we look forward to age with dismay, if not despair.

Again, Youth is the MOST DANGEROUS AND CRITICAL OF ALL SEASONS. A remembrance of its Creator is its only hope of safety.

For, to say nothing of the numbers that die in youth, there are such blights and blasts I assure you, Children, which are ready to meet the tender plant of youth, as you will scarcely believe. You also live in a time in which these blasts are more abroad than formerly. Now there is no security against these, but putting yourselves under the protection of your Creator. Your Parents and your Ministers may teach and watch, but your real safety lies in 'abiding under the shadow of the Almighty. Surely He only CAN deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He,' and He only can 'cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings mayest thou safely trust: it is his truth only that can be thy shield and buckler.'

To give another view:—Life is a journey through a dangerous wilderness: and, in such a journey, it will not serve us to ask any one we may chance to meet. "Which is the right way?" We need one fast friend to lead and protect us. If one of you were lost in a wood, and in danger of being starved or devoured, you would long for your Parent's own hand, and hold it fast if it were there; disregarding what strangers should say who passed by. Such an infallible friend and director you will find in your Creator. Oh, that you may be enabled to remember this!

But, perhaps, you would be ready to say to me, "If I am liable to be *misled*, yet I have never thought

I was in danger of being *devoured.*"—Ah! you little suspect how little yet you really know! And this will show the necessity of your remembering in youth your Creator's WORD. For has he not expressly said, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour?' Now, if you knew there was a Lion in the Street waiting to destroy you as soon as you went out of these doors, what care, and what fear it would occasion! Yet, at worst, such a Lion could only destroy your *body;* whereas the roaring Lion, of which God warns you, is going about, seeking to destroy both your body and your soul: and if he can prevail with you to be forgetful of your Creator, he will effectually prevail. On the other hand, however this roaring Lion may go about, he shall neither destroy, nor even hurt such, as truly 'remember their Creator.'

Further, it is MOST HONOURABLE TO GOD, when our Youth is dedicated to his service.

When he has given us his best things, should we present him with the dregs and refuse of ours? To see young Samuel, standing like a 'lily among thorns;' saying by every word and action, "I am indeed but a child, but he will accept my feeble services. I am God's. I rejoice in being his:"—to see a child thus separating himself from the ungodly children of this world, and shining as a bright star in a dark night:—Or to see one, like Timothy, learning from a child to know and honour those Scriptures which were 'able to make him wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus'—What an honour to God are such infant witnesses as these!—Verily, the highest grandeurs of this world are beggary when compared with this work!

Once more. To remember your Creator in Youth is MOST PROFITABLE TO YOURSELVES.

There are but two Masters, and you must serve one of them. And what a mercy not to be the slave of

Satan in your best years! What a blessing to escape the mischiefs and dangers to which you are so liable; and to be early preserved from the snares, blights, and blasts of the world, the flesh, and the Devil!

Oh! I could tell you sad stories of young people, who have been drawn aside, and who have gone on from bad to worse. They have first done wrong in little things; then, proceeded to greater; then, lost their character; till, at length, being tied and bound with the chain of evil habits, some have come to an untimely end. And what think you ruined all these? They 'forgot their God.' While Solomon remembered his Creator, saying, 'Lord, I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in: give thy servant an understanding heart'—how wise and prosperous was he in his childhood! But, when he forgot his God, how foolish and disgraceful in his old age was even Solomon!

On the contrary. I have known young persons, who once by their ill courses were the misery and disgrace of their families, yet, upon turning to their God, became new creatures, new comforts, and new honours to their friends, as well as blessings to society.

And yet, great as the benefit of this may seem, it is but a small part of what might be said: for 'he, that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit:' he is 'an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ:' nor hath it 'entered into the heart of man' to conceive 'what God hath prepared for him.' Such a Child may lose his Parents—he may be turned out into the world without a friend—he may look round and say, "I do not know to whom to go for a bit of bread:" yet if this Child can also say from the bottom of his heart, "My 'Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done:' Oh, help me to suffer it patiently, and do it sincerely!" he has a Father, and a Saviour too, that will say in return—"Fear

not, 'I will guide thee by my counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory.'"

Now, my dear children, if some great man were to offer you his friendship, would you think you could accept of it too *soon?* Or if one was to bring you a sum of money, or a large estate, would you desire them to be kept from you till some future time of life? But surely the friendship of your God is infinitely greater than these: 'Remember NOW therefore thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

But this will more clearly appear from what I proposed to consider,

III. WHY, THIS MOST IMPORTANT WORK SHOULD NOT BE DEFERRED: namely, 'because evil days come, and years draw nigh in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.'

It is impossible for me to make you fully understand THE INFIRMITIES and IMPEDIMENTS of old age: if you live long enough, however, you will know them experimentally.

I have not time in this discourse to explain to you that figurative description of one growing old which follows the text: suffice it to say for the present, that the old man is described as going down hill to his *long home*, with the loss of his faculties, and the burden of his infirmities. His sight fails: his limbs tremble: his heart sinks: he has enough to do then to bear up under himself. He can scarcely attend to any thing new, and much less perform any thing difficult. Suppose you saw a man groaning with a very heavy burden, under which he was ready to sink; and suppose, while he was thus loaded, you were to attempt to instruct him: he would naturally say, "Can I attend to any thing, with this burden upon my back? Stay, stay: surely I must be released from this load before I can hear."

But old age has not only its infirmity, but also its peculiar INCAPACITY *for improvement.* If the tree

has long struck root in a bad soil, who can then remove it? If it has long been growing crooked, who can straighten it? The old tree will sooner *break* than bend.

Old Age, even in its best estate, like that of *Barzillai*, how affectingly doth it speak! 'I am this day fourscore years old; and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing-men and singing-women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my Lord the King?' At such a time our very 'strength' is but 'labour and sorrow.'

I protest to you that I have never discovered a greater device of the Devil, nor one more common, than putting off religion to old age. "It is time enough," says that enemy, (to which our hearts are too prone to listen) "It is time enough to think of religion when you are old. Now is the season for a little pleasure. What harm is there in this and that? It is quite natural for youth to follow amusements; and to see as much of life as they can; and, bye and bye, religion will come of course."

COME OF COURSE! Religion come of course! What, the old deep-rooted, crooked tree transplant itself, and suddenly become straight! the best and greatest work undertaken and performed in *evil days* of pain and infirmity! Dear children, this is the counsel of him, who 'was a liar from the beginning.' I am sorry to say, that I have heard too many young persons whom he has deceived speak in this manner. To be secure, therefore from the destructive effects of such evil counsel, 'Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.'

Old age too has its own TEMPTATIONS as well as youth. It is prone to fear every thing, and to doubt every thing, but naturally indisposed to learn any thing. It is apt to sink into peevishness; and enter-

tain a fondness for its own opinions, and therefore of course cannot easily bear to be instructed. Besides which, there is a weariness and languor that cannot bear disturbance, though every thing important be at stake. It naturally seeks rest:—"Let me alone," cries the old man: "let me alone. Let me die in peace. If I am wrong, I must be wrong. I am too old to learn. It is too late to think of any thing new. If the tree be crooked, it must remain crooked; and, as it falls, so it must lie."—Children, whenever you observe these *evil days* of old people, think of the words of our text.

On the other hand, before these *evil days draw nigh*, what wisdom to prepare against their coming!—to have a firm staff to lean upon, when flesh and heart fail!—to have in ready use a lamp for your erring feet, and a cordial for your fainting spirits, through faith in the word of a faithful Creator!—to become, from long experience, a witness, like Obadiah, of the truth and grace of Him, whom you have served from your youth! What on earth is a more blessed and honourable post than this? 'The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness.'

I shall conclude this Discourse, by first answering a common OBJECTION, and then adding a word of EXHORTATION.

The OBJECTION which a young person is apt to bring, (and which, while young, I felt myself) is this: "I believe," says he, "that real religion is the *better part*;—the 'one thing needful,' which, alone, 'shall never be taken away.' I believe there is nothing that can for a moment be balanced against it: 'for what shall it profit' me, 'if I could gain the whole world and lose my own soul?' What a shocking thing it would be, upon leaving this world, to have nothing on which to rest the sole of my foot? Certainly, to be truly religious, is to be truly wise. But,

the great difficulty is HOW, and by what *means*, I may attain to it? For when I have tried to remember my Creator, my heart and thoughts are the next moment gone from Him. Sometimes, after a sermon, I go home, and think what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian: but, on the Monday, other things come before me, and drive these better thoughts away; and I feel no disposition through the week, to pursue them. I imagine, therefore, that I am not *able* to be religious."

My Dear Children, I have felt all this before you: but observe, I knew not then expressly the Christian Secret, where to get strength; and therefore failed in my endeavours. We, who have long run the Christian Race, feel that we have no 'power in ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves,' but 'our sufficiency is of God.' Yet the Apostle, who said this, could also say, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.—My Son,' saith he, 'be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus.' Observe, Children, he was to be strong through the 'grace which is in Christ.' Now we can say the same to you, be strong: but in *His* strength. You must not only believe in Him, as a Saviour through his Cross; but hope to run the race which He sets before you, by his 'POWER working in you to will and do of his good pleasure.' Run, therefore, by 'looking unto Jesus.'

Suppose there was a necessity for you to lift a great weight from the ground: you might indeed try, and try again, and find your own strength exerted in vain; but if your Friend or Parent, who set you the task, came and joined his hand to yours, it might then be lifted with ease. And thus it is that the feeblest Christian succeeds in his endeavours.

Or, to return again to the garden:—you have heard of trees being ingrafted: now the graft is a little stick or peg of wood, which would dry and rot if left by

itself; but the gardener fixes it into the stem of a living tree, and, thus receiving life or sap from the stem to which it is united, it soon becomes one with the tree itself, and thereby buds, and blossoms, and brings forth fruit. In this way we find our Lord teaching his disciples how to succeed in his service. 'I am,' says he, 'the vine: ye are the branches. He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me, ye can do nothing.'

You see then, Dear Children, the Christian's Secret. He employs almighty grace for the performance of work, which cannot be done without it. 'Take my yoke,' saith Christ, 'and learn of me, and ye shall find rest.' Bear my *Cross*, and ye shall find it bear *you*. If your Father, or Mother, or Minister is pressing forward in the heavenly road, bless God for the example; but believe me, neither your Father, your Mother, nor your Minister could bear up under their difficulties, if there was not one mightier to bear *them* up. He is able to do the same for you, a Child; and has already done it, in innumerable instances. If even so great a character as David be left to himself, the weakest and vilest creature cannot fall lower than he did.

Upon the whole, you see that nothing in religion can be done *without* Christ, while every thing to which he calls us may be done *with* him. In this way it is, that the Christian becomes a conqueror: for 'who is he, that overcometh the world; but he, that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?'

I shall leave you this morning with only adding a short word of EXHORTATION.

You have been shown,

1. How you should remember your Creator. 2. WHEN HE should specially be remembered: and 3. WHY you should not put off this remembrance. Now let me beseech you to think seriously of the dreadful evil of living longer destitute of a real acquaintance

with, and remembrance of your God; and to think on the other hand, of the blessed privileges of those who truly 'remember' Him. 'Cleave to him,' therefore, 'for He is thy Life.' And that, in the days of thy youth; for then it is not only done with less difficulty, but your Youth may be your only opportunity for doing it at all; and should you even live to old age, I have shown you how *evil* those days are for such a work, and how unlikely it should succeed if put off to that time.

Oh that it may please God to help, if it were but one of you, to become wise unto salvation from this moment! Then shall we and even the angels rejoice that another lost sheep is found and secured. In thus addressing you, we seek only to make you truly rich, truly wise, truly happy: and we know none can be really so till he remembers his Creator.

When you see a poor, forsaken, wicked Child, wandering about the streets, ragged, hungry, and diseased, you are naturally led to pity him; but it would be well if you recollected that his rags and hunger, and disease are not the *principal* parts of his wretchedness. They render him, indeed, very pitiable, and call for such help as we can afford him; but, as I said before, his outward want is not the *worst* part of his misery: the worst part is, what we call his *moral misery*, namely, that he knows not God, and never remembers his name but to profane it—that he is a willing slave of the devil, who tempts him to swear, to lie, and to steal—that in short he is a lost sheep, wandering from Christ, the true and only shepherd and bishop of souls. What are his outward rags, and filth, and wants, and diseases, compared with this? They only respect his dying body; but these wants and disorders beggar and destroy his immortal soul.

But now suppose that any one of us could bring this poor Child to read the Bible, to pray for grace.

and to 'remember' his 'Creator in the days of his youth;' his wants and disorders might be removed: but even if they were to remain, and he to lie in the street, like Lazarus, covered with diseases, and with none but dogs to pity him: yet, if his heart could rise to God, and his faith take hold of a Redeemer, what then would be the changes and chances of this mortal life to him? As it was said of Joseph in his affliction, it must be said of him in his very lowest and worst temporal circumstances—his 'God is with him:' Angels are ready to receive him; and a crown of glory is preparing for him.

You have also heard, that your Creator will judge the world which he has made; and that the day cometh, when 'great and small shall stand before him.' Consider, my dear children, what a joy it will be to any of you in that day to be able to say—"I know the Judge. I have trusted in his promises. I have remembered him in my feeble prayers and endeavours; and now I know that he will remember ME."

Does such an one wish to ask, "Will he remember me? Will he remember me, should I die while a poor little child—and that, among the millions who shall stand before Him in that great day?—Will He indeed remember ME?"—Hear what he says, (and when you hear any thing from his word, say to yourself, "At least THIS is certain") 'They that feared the Lord, spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jewels: and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.'

That these truths may be written in every heart, God of his infinite mercy grant for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

ADDRESS

TO

THE PARISHIONERS

OF

CHOBHAM AND BISLEY.

ADDRESS,

&c.

London, Jan. 16th, 1801.

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS:

My sending an address to you at this time, is in consequence of a violent attack, which I lately received from my old and painful disorder while at Chobham, and which obliged me to return suddenly from a situation which I found so prejudicial in the winter season. This prevented my expressing to you more at large what I now briefly attempt by a letter.

Nothing could render me more happy while I was with you, than to find that a serious regard to true religion had taken place in some of your minds. I trust I can say, with the Apostle, 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth:' 3 John, 4.

It was, however, with some anxiety, that I received the information that some of you had lately held such meetings for private religious instruction, as well as devotion, as may eventually prove inconvenient. I have lived to see that sometimes unforeseen and dangerous consequences have followed the best intentions: and also that the safest way of preventing such consequences is to meet the wishes of such as are religiously disposed, as nearly as propriety will admit. It was the opinion, therefore, both of myself and my valuable Assistant, that it would be expedient for one of us to preside in any assembly of yourselves that should be thought necessary for your edification. We considered that this would be the most advantageous means for

securing at once *Unity*, *Harmony*, and *Truth*,—points highly essential in a day like the present, in which divisions and heresies of all sorts are rending the Church of Christ, and exposing his religion to the contempt of its adversaries. We thought, therefore, that the pious purposes of your assembling together would be fully answered, in your attendance upon our family-worship and exposition of the Scriptures on the Sunday evening, and one other evening in the week. But I meant this only as a resource in that season of the year, in which it would prove dangerous to my health (and perhaps to some of yours) to attend in the evening at Church, as I used to do in the summer. I am glad also to commend your ready concurrence with us in this measure.

With respect to the *Doctrines* of Christianity, I need not repeat what I have so lately enlarged upon among you. I will, however, remind you, that, next to what the Scriptures present, the best view which I ever met with of those doctrines, is to be found in the Articles and Liturgy of our Church. But, to say nothing here of the dangerous errors of some who oppose them, I wish you to beware of that Narrowness of Mind, which is so ready to catch and cavil, at a few expressions in them. For such objectors, we are apt to turn aside to vain and unprofitable janglings, 'doating about questions, and strifes of words: whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, and evil surmisings:' 1 Tim. vi, 4. Let us rather be thankful that we live under a Government, which maintains a Church built upon the sound and evangelical principles of our illustrious Reformers, and which they sealed with their blood.

There is, however, one point which I see reason to mention more particularly: I mean the *Spirit* or *Temper* of Christianity. This, I fear, has sometimes not been sufficiently attended to, by even those, who have shown great zeal for its doctrines. We should attend, not only to what Christ and his Apostles spoke and

did, but also to the spirit and temper in which they spoke and acted. We should mark how they conducted themselves, not only towards their friends, but towards their most violent enemies. With what patience and forbearance, with what sobriety and charity, did they recommend their faith! 'Ye are witnesses,' says one, 'and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves:' 1 Thes. ii. 10. Therefore, whether as Masters or Servants, as Husbands or Wives, as Parents or Children, be careful not to fall into so gross a mistake as to think it sufficient if you merely learn and maintain the *Doctrines* of the Gospel: but see also that you study and imbibe its *Spirit;* and that ye so set it forth in your tempers, dealings, and conversations, at home and abroad, that 'with well-doing, ye may put to silence the foolishness of wicked men:' 1 Pet. ii. 15.

Besides which, by being thus not only almost but *altogether* Christians, you will prevail and prosper in several other important respects.

1. You will glorify GOD: you will shame his adversaries: you will prove the truth of his word; and be his witnesses, that He still, by his Spirit, dwelleth with men on the earth.

2. You will edify your NEIGHBOUR, by showing him what Christianity *is*, and what it *does* for men. You will show what it is to be a real branch in the True Vine; and thereby every sincere inquirer after truth will be convinced of the reality and excellence of your religion, and be induced to seek after it.

3. You will hereby best assist your MINISTERS in their labours. What they declare and describe, you will prove and exemplify: so that we shall be able to say of you, as the Apostle did of the Corinthians, 'Ye are our Epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men:' 2 Cor. iii, 2.

4. You will be YOURSELVES 'blessed in the deed.

I mean to return to you as soon as the precariou state of my health permits; and then shall hope for an opportunity of discoursing on these things more largely. In the mean time, you shall have my earnest prayers for your daily advancement in true religion: and I request yours for me, as the best return which you can make or I can receive.

Beloved, let us fear nothing in a right cause. *Only*, to use the Apostle's words, 'let your conversation,' or general conduct among men, 'be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that, whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God:' Phil. i, 27, 28.

With respect to my Parishioners in general, I desire here to express my grateful acknowledgments of the numerous civilities which I have upon all occasions received from them: especially for their remarkable attention to the discourses delivered by me to them from the pulpit.

I have reason, however, to lament, that there are some in my parish, who lately appear not only to have received no benefit from my ministry, but who are even offended at it. That vital and practical Christianity, like its Author, should often prove an offence, was foretold by its Author repeatedly, and that in the clearest terms. He bids every Christian, and especially every Minister, weigh the consequences of becoming his Disciple.—'Which of you,' says he, 'intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost?' Luke xiv, 28. And who, let me ask, was ever exempted from this *cost*, that was a real builder? Not the Prophets; nor the Apostles; nor Christ himself; nor any real Minister of Christ, that

ever I heard or read of. This arises from the very nature of things; for, (to change the metaphor) till man has some sense of his disease, he will, like a sick man, who fancies himself well, oppose the kindest friend, who offers him a sovereign remedy.—Having therefore counted the cost, and knowing the natural indisposition of man to the remedy of God; I hope we shall neither be surprised nor discouraged, in meeting those consequences, which, as Ministers of Christ, we are forewarned by him to expect.

As one, however, that watches for your souls, and must give an account of his Ministry, I earnestly entreat you to consider what an awful thing it is to 'walk in the counsel of the ungodly,' to 'stand in the way of sinners,' and to 'sit in the seat of the scornful.' But if, whilst the whole counsel of God is declared, you should be found so lost both to your duty and your interest, as to continue to reject or neglect it, this, by God's help, shall not prevent my continuing to seek your good, in the use of the only means that can promote it. It shall not provoke me to 'return evil for evil,' and 'railing for railing, but contrarywise blessing:' 1 Pet. iii. 9. It shall not prevent my hoping for the recovery of a bitter opposer; having formerly been myself more bitter than he. It shall not prevent my endeavouring to affect him by invitations and persuasives. I will call upon my heart to wait, and hope, and pray, for his return to God. I will watch for the first appearances of it. I will omit no means to cherish it when it appears: nor dare I omit, if such a one still persists in his opposition, to declare to him fully and plainly the dreadful and inevitable consequences thereof.

Men and brethren, think seriously on these things—'things that belong to your peace'—and THAT 'before they are hidden from your eyes.' I shall soon cease to speak to you of them, and you to hear: but both of

us assuredly must give an account of them to God. That we may be so prepared to meet Him, that 'he that soweth and they that reap may then rejoice together,' is the sincere and fervent prayer of

Your affectionate Minister,

RICHARD CECIL.

A

WORD ON THE PEACE.

WITH

A HINT FOR A LASTING ONE;

IN A LETTER TO G. S., ESQ. OF B—.

Second Thoughts are best.

A

WORD ON THE PEACE.

Oct. 15th, 1801.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your letter, desiring a few thoughts on the Peace, which you wish to disperse in your populous neighbourhood. Though I can say nothing as a politician, yet, rather than disoblige you by saying nothing at all, I will tell you what occurred on my first receiving the welcome news.

You know I am an invalid, and growing into years: and, as age and sickness naturally seek quiet, I retire during the summer months to a small village in Surrey, which lies some miles from the high road. Here, indeed, I obtain a relief which the town does not afford: but one inconvenience attends our situation —we have no means of knowing what is going on in the busy world, except the tidings which a gentleman from the city brings, who visits his family here once a week; and also what we learn from our weekly paper.

Now, our friend, whose return on the Saturday we eagerly watch, came down, and astonished us with the unexpected news of—PEACE! A knot of neighbours was soon assembled to hear the account: but, though a few rejoiced that a stop would at length be put to the effusion of blood and the cries of widows and orphans, that provisions would be cheaper, trade flourish, and the occasion of much enmity be removed, &c. &c. yet I could perceive other springs at work: One, who had a house and land to sell, listened ea-

gerly, and hoped Peace would bring Purchasers: A poor Labourer crossed the road, and tried to edge in his thought, that bread, though fallen, would be still lower: A Farmer stood *thoughtful*, but said nothing: Another, who had served a neighbouring camp, doubted, after all, what sort of a peace this might turn out: But, our carpenter was loud on the occasion: "Peace, at any rate," said he, "is best for the nation: *deals will come down finely now*, I'll warrant ye."

We, however, set the bells a ringing immediately, though late on the Saturday evening: we went to church the next day, but thought and talked too much of the Peace, and its consequences; and, on the Monday, we were all alive in preparing to celebrate it. Though I bear the character of a precise and retiring kind of man, I endeavoured to join my neighbours in their expressions of joy. I lighted up my windows: I suffered my children and servants in the evening to be the endangered spectators of the blaze and noise with which the village was filled: I contributed to the ringing, though I feared it would end in drunkenness; and rather encouraged the discharge of guns, squibs, and crackers, though disorder and mischief were the probable consequences.

But the occasion was great, and I was willing to appear pleased, as I really was. "These expressions," said I to myself, "of our general joy must not be strictly scrutinised as to the *manner*."

At length I put out my snuffs of candles; and, after hearing the narrow escapes of my children from being set on fire by the squibs, and reproving my maid for staying out too late among greater mischiefs than squibs, we retired to rest.

Presently after this came our Newspaper, and amused us afresh. We found that the display which had thrown our villagers into amazement, was but as a rushlight in the general blaze of joy. We read of

the ingenious and expensive devices with which the metropolis and other great towns were illuminated; of feastings, of processions, of bands of music, of military salutations, and of mail coaches covered with trophies, met by parties, and drawn home in triumph without horses.

"Well," said I, "the occasion is great; and big with benefits of various kinds, far more extensive than we can fully comprehend. What kind of man is he, that can be unmoved? Certainly, he must be stupid and infatuated to a high degree! He must be ———. But, stay a little: may we not mistake on the other side? May we not be so carried away by a present benefit, as to quite lose sight of a GREATER? Let us think again. Is the Bible a fable? Is time of more importance than eternity? Are we, perishing sinners, quite sober in being so alive to *temporal* events, while *eternal* ones seem constantly forgotten? Let us think again—"

Repeating this in different ways, as I sat dosing by the fire-side, my imagination presented to me a number of persons in a vessel at sea, which had nearly been wrecked by a violent storm. The Pilot told them that they could stay but a little while longer on board; but, if they took to the boat, and, by the help of their compass, made directly for the next harbour, they might yet be secure: "but," said he, "if you stay here, talking of the late storm, and riotously enjoying your escape, we may all yet go to the bottom." "Hold your tongue, you dull blockhead," said one: "no croaking here:" "Tap the cask," said another: "A song, a song!" cried a third. Clamour soon drowned remonstrance: and, thus scorning the Pilot's counsel, they sat down together to enjoy themselves, with their backs to the harbour. But, while the song was singing, a mighty wave rolled, and, (except the Pilot, who had leaped into the boat) they all went down together.

This reverie turned my mind into a new train of thinking. When I first sat down, the present Peace seemed to be every thing, but now it appeared COMPARATIVELY to be nothing. "Every thing," said I, to myself, "is great or little by comparison. What is this Peace, which seems to carry away the hearts and thoughts of the nation: when compared with the Peace, proclaimed from above through a Redeemer, sung by angels at his birth, purchased by his death, and by which He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers?"

The *present* Peace is proclaimed to a few countries, but the *eternal* Peace to all nations. Wise men fear the *present* Peace will still leave us in danger from the seducing arts and deranging principles of our enemies; but the Peace of the Gospel secures its children not only against the craft and malice of the world, but of the flesh and the devil. The *present* Peace still leaves us under many wants: it cannot relieve us under pain of body or mind: we may still remain erring, afflicted, depraved, guilty, dying sinners: but the Peace of God bringeth a Guide to the wanderer, Comfort to the afflicted, Grace to the depraved, Pardon to the guilty, and eternal Life to the dying. The *present* Peace may be broken almost as soon as it is made, but the Peace from above has this charter—'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee:' Isaiah liv, 10. Once more: the *present* Peace, however lasting, can continue but a short time to any of us who have been so animated by the news; but that Peace, which is secured by the promise and oath, Heb. vi, 18, of God to those who 'flee for refuge to the hope set before them' in Christ Jesus, cannot be disturbed by time or death: time but ripens it, and death per-

fects it. 'For the righteous hath hope in his death—He shall enter into peace.'

In a word, the Peace of God, unlike all other, is proposed most freely to *every* man: it is attended with no *danger:* it will meet *every want*: it admits of no *hazard*: it can never *end.* Whoever, therefore, continues madly to despise counsel, and perish in a vessel that soon must sink, let us be *wise;* let us hearken to counsel before it is too late; let us take to the boat, and make for the harbour: that while others, like the sottish sailors, think of nothing but the peace and festivity of a moment, we may secure a peace and prosperity which shall last for ever.

I am, &c. R. C.

SHORT HINTS

TO

A SOLDIER,

IN A LETTER FROM HIS FRIEND.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it....Prov. xv, 23.

SHORT HINTS

TO

A SOLDIER.

MY GOOD FRIEND:

I was thinking, the other day, of the quiet which I enjoy, while you are gone forth in arms to defend me. I also considered what I could do for you in return. "The Physician," said I, "though he does not fight, can bring medicines to the sick and wounded: and even a ploughboy might lead a regiment into a road which they had missed. Cannot I then do something for these brave fellows? Some of them may be sick, and others sad. Some may not be aware who are their Worst Enemies; and others may not know their Best Friends; and others still may never yet have heard what is the True Victory. I will try, at least, to serve them in these things. For who can tell?"

"Besides," thought I, "do I not know how useful a hint has sometimes been to me? and do I not know what benefit a great soldier once received by a hint from a little maid, telling him of a great Prophet who could cure him of his leprosy?* Why may not other Soldiers be profited by a word as well as he? I say these my defenders should not want a real friend to instruct and comfort them. I will, therefore, write them a letter; and appeal to the Bible for the truth of it."

A good Soldier is one, who, as the Wise Man expresses it, 'fears God and the King, and meddles not

* 2 Kings, v, 2, 3.

with them that are given to change:' Prov. xxiv, 21. While bad men will always be murmuring and complaining, he knows his privileges as an Englishman. He is firmly attached to his King and Country. He feels bound, in honour and conscience, to defend both. He scorns to tarnish the British name by cowardice, idleness, drunkenness, fraud, swearing, indecency, or the like.

He also knows that there is no villainy or cruelty greater than that of robbing a poor, innocent girl of her character and virtue; sinking her thus into prostitution, and destroying at once her body and soul. He knows, too, that those, who tempt him to disbelieve the Bible, or to mock at sacred things, would, if they could, make him an enemy to God and goodness, cut off his only hope, and turn as it were, a man into a devil.

When Rogues come and tell such a soldier, that to be free, he must be a rebel, he is too wise to be caught with the bait. He knows, that, without subordination and obedience, the army, and every other society, must be turned into a Bedlam:—that civil war is the worst of all war:—and that such, as do not submit to lawful authority, can enjoy neither liberty nor property; but must become the slaves of any tyrant or mob, that happens to get uppermost.

And, because a Soldier's life is a life of danger, a wise Soldier learns how to stand prepared to meet every enemy, under every form, and at any moment. For, having the favour of Him, who governs and directs all things, and who he knows will make him happy, whether he lives or dies, he has nothing to fear.

"Fear the Enemy!" perhaps you are ready to say: "There is not a man among us that has any such fear. We stand ready to meet the worst. We are ready to"——

Stay a little, my good friend, and let me ask you. Have you well considered who your *worst enemies* are?

"Why yes, to be sure we have"—some might answer: "What enemies can be worse than the French? They mean to do here, as they have done wherever they came. They mean to strip us of our property, to ravish our wives and daughters, to make slaves of us, and then tell us we are free. Besides which, they"——

Pray don't tell me of what every body knows. I want to tell you what every body does not yet know, namely,

I. Who are our WORST ENEMIES:

II. Who are our BEST FRIENDS: and

III. Which is the TRUE VICTORY.

First, then, as to our ENEMIES.

And I must inform you, that we have worse enemies than even the French themselves.

"Is this possible?" say you.

I say yes. For those enemies are worse than even the French, who have made the French what they are, and would make the English like them.

"Pray name these Enemies."

I will. They are the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*.

"But what do you mean by the *world?*"

I mean the world (not as God made it, but) as *sin* has made it. 'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world:' 1 John ii, 16. Now when Money, Pride, or Pleasure promises you happiness in breaking God's commands—and too many are encouraging you by bad examples and conversation to break them—say, "Here is one of my worst Enemies! This is the *world!* This is that cheat, which, like the apple that Eve was tempted with, would take away my heart from God, his Favour and his Kingdom, where only true joys abound."

"And what is the *Flesh?*"

It is the scripture word for the sin of our nature, and that corrupt heart of man which it declares to be 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,' Jer. xvii, 9, and which is naturally so set upon the world. We may know this Enemy by its works, which you may read in Gal. v, 19. 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: and they which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'

"And who is the *Devil?* for some have tried to persuade me that as to a devil, it is all a bugbear."

Yes; and the Devil himself will persuade you to believe them if he can. Don't you think it likely, that, if the French could make a landing, they would send their scouts to tell you that *it is all a bugbear*, till they had got into the heart of the country?

But you know I promised to appeal to the Bible, and not to a crafty enemy's account of himself. While he is acting in ambush, our Bible says, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist stedfast in the faith:' 1 Pet. v, 8.

"Why these are enemies," perhaps you will say, "that I never seriously thought of. These notions are quite *new*."

But how so? Were you not baptized, and signed with the sign of the Cross, "in token," as the Church says, "that hereafter you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against *Sin*, the *World*, and the *Devil*, and thus to continue Christ's faithful Soldier and Servant unto your life's end?"

But, whether known or not, these are our *worst* Enemies: and it is on this account that the bad principles of the French are more to be feared than their

swords. But know your enemies, whether in France or England. Whoever or whatever leads you from God and goodness to unbelief and wickedness, call an *Enemy*. Nor need you to stand and inquire how to *name* such an enemy, for it signifies little which of three murderers makes an attack on us; or whether a man is killed by a *bullet*, a *sword*, or a *dose of poison*.

And consider, I pray you, what a shocking thing it is for a brave fellow, after he has routed the French, to fall a prey to still worse enemies. The French, if they conquered us, could but kill the *body;* but the enemies whom I have mentioned will sink both body and soul in the Pit, 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched:' Mark xi, 44.

Now if you do seriously consider, you will be ready to ask, "What can I do against such enemies as these?"

I answer, a man may often do that by the *help of friends*, which he cannot do alone. God himself comes to help a man, when he sends him a real Friend.

Of your FRIENDS I shall speak next. And as it is a great thing to find a real friend, so it is wise to *know* him while he lasts. Many a man has mourned that he never knew his true friend till he was gone.

I need not say that he, who relieves your wants, comforts you in trouble, visits you when sick, corrects your mistakes, gives you good counsel, and is concerned for your interest, or that of your family, is a real *friend*.

The Government under which you live, and all who strive to promote rule and order under it, are real *friends;* for, by them, we all enjoy that liberty and tranquillity of which no other nation can boast.

Those officers also are to be considered among the number of your best friends, who endeavour to restrain vice and immorality; and thereby render you sober, respectable, and able Soldiers: and especially such as add to their command the great force of their

example, in chastity, sobriety, and regular attendance on public worship.

But still I must tell you that you and I have *enemies* and *wants*, which no friend or power upon earth can relieve us under. If you could ask our most excellent and gracious Sovereign King George about this, he would tell you that there are benefits to be had, which he himself cannot give, and of which he stands in as much need as you or I: ay, and what is more, that he himself would be deplorably miserable after all, if he should be put off with a crown only, and miss these benefits:—I mean pardon of all our sins—peace with God—an assurance of his favour—victory over every enemy—and an everlasting crown. All these have been purchased for sinners: the chief of sinners have received them, and they are set before you in the Gospel; as it is written, 'Whosoever will, let him take the waters of life, freely:' Rev. xxii, 17.

Now to know *that* Friend, who can deliver from every enemy, and supply every want—One, without whom a King must become poorer than a beggar, and by whom a beggar may become richer than a King—this, I say, is knowing something to purpose.

I declare to you, Soldier, that, while I am writing, the thought of such a Friend brings such comfort to my heart, that I am well paid already for my labour.

This I say again is good news; which is what the old word *Gospel* signifies: but not more good than *true*.

Who then are those atheistical wretches, abroad and at home, who are seeking to destroy this Gospel, and rob you of your only help and comfort? What are they like but a pack of madmen or idiots, who, when they had set fire to your magazines and stores, pulled down your barracks and hospitals, and destroyed your arms, could not afterwards set up so much as a shed to cover you, give you a morsel of bread, or bring you a better weapon than a child's pop-gun for your defence?

But, to return. The Gospel presents a FRIEND. Among other names he is called the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION: Heb. ii, 10. He makes his Soldiers invincible, by putting upon them the 'whole Armour of God,' Eph. vi, 13; and, having, 'all power in Heaven and in earth, he supplies all their wants out of his riches in glory.'

When man, at the beginning, was enticed from his God, and fell among enemies and wants, this Deliverer was promised. He came, according to this promise. He lived and died, 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:' 1 Pet. iii, 18. Having taught us his Father's will, he laid down his life for our transgressions; and, in dying, conquered our enemies; and, having made our peace with God, rose a conqueror, 'leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men:' Eph. iv. 8.

"Oh," perhaps you answer, "I have heard of Jesus Christ, and don't doubt what you say of him; for I never was so wicked as to reject the Bible: but, somehow, I don't know how to get any help or comfort from him:—I am not religious.—What can a Soldier do?"

Whenever you can procure the life of the brave Col. Gardiner. read it; and you will see what a soldier can do. In the mean time I will tell you, not a Fable, but a matter of Fact.

There was not, perhaps, a more wicked fellow in all the service than a soldier I am acquainted with. But, one day, while he was gone two or three miles from the troop, it rained so hard, that he was glad to take shelter in a farm-house.

Now it happened that a good man lived there, who soon began talking of what lay very near his heart, as you know we are all apt to do: and what should this be, but the inestimable Friend I have been recommending to you? And he talked thus:

"A friend in need is a friend indeed: and there are

times in which every man feels the need of such a friend. But vainly do we hope to find him among men. Yet I know such a one may be found. Indeed all I have discovered to purpose is, that none but Jesus Christ can do me any good. Trouble was sent to preach my need of his help; but I was a good while before I knew what to do. At length, however, he, that had long called to me by his word, gave me ears to hear, and a heart to follow him. Well, at length, weary and heavy laden, I came for help to him, and I have found it, and all I want in it: and now I cannot help telling to others that there is no malady of the soul, but there is an infallible remedy for it in Jesus Christ; nor any thing which we can want, but he is as willing as he is able to give it."

It still kept raining, and the soldier was kept hearing while several parts of scripture were compared; and he saw that the grand design of all scripture was to show the Saviour to the Sinner, and bring the Sinner to the Saviour; and it appeared that the good Samaritan, Luke x, 33—35, who bound up the wounds of the man who fell among thieves, took him to the inn and provided for him, was but a picture of this Friend.

At length the weather cleared, and the Soldier went away; but not in the state of mind in which he had entered the house. He went (as he lately told me) with the farmer, on the next Sunday, to hear an eminent clergyman; and then God brought the truth home to his heart. He called at the house of an acquaintance of his, who told me how surprised he was to hear him say, after he had sat a few minutes, "Tom, I have been a mad man all my life, and am but just recovered:" and then related what he had heard, and what he felt.

For, as a man wakes out of a dream, and recovers his right mind after the wild imaginations of the night are past, and tells the first person he meets of the disorder in which his spirits have been; so did this Sol-

dier talk to his friend. He plainly saw how dreadfully he had been fighting against God and his own soul, by a course of swearing, drunkenness, debauchery, and unbelief. He now felt what a bad example, yea what a curse he had been to his fellow soldiers!! what an awful evil sin is, with which he had sported! and what a depth of misery he must have fallen into had he been cut off in such a course! He also felt that he never could be sufficiently thankful for the repentance which God had now given him; and for the lively hope afforded him in those gracious promises made to returning sinners.

He did much more. Many talk of religion who have none; but this man proves his recovery by a new course of life; and he proves, that, when a man has a heart to serve God, he may serve him in any station of life. If some, from ignorance, scorned that change in him which he had formerly scorned in others, no man was so ready to forgive; for he felt no man owed so much to forgiveness. No man was so faithful to his trust or obedient in his station: for he served his God while he served his King. No man bore up more nobly under difficulties; for he knew they were all appointed of his God, and were working together for his good. No man faced death with so firm a heart; for he knew, that, whether he stood or fell, he was secure of life everlasting, through the promise and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Besides which, I must tell you that he had and still has more courage than many, who only can stand the push of a battle. He calmly dared to confess his Friend before men; and to declare, upon every proper occasion, "I owe all that I am, and all that I hope to be, to the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I again remind you that I have not invented this account, but tell you the real history of one who is still living to the honour of his FRIEND and the good of mankind.

If you have such a sense of sin as has been described, you will be apt to doubt whether his friend is willing to be *yours*. Remember the Enemies I told you of: one of them, at least, is at work; and one of the sins you have to repent of is this unbelief: for hath not the Friend of Sinners said, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out?' John vi, 37. Does he not also complain, 'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life?' John iv, 40.

"But what," you may ask, "is *coming* to him?" I answer, it is trusting in him according to his word. As it is written, 'He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name:' John i, 11, 12.

"And how," you may ask, "shall I be able to do this?" I answer, pray in Christ's name for the Holy Spirit, as your promised guide and comforter; and again remember who hath said, 'If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him:' Luke xi, 13.

Now, having shown you your worst Enemies, and your best Friends, the path of Victory lies before you; of which let me speak a few words.

The TRUE AND REAL VICTORY is that, which does not mock a man. Wicked men are permitted to have success for a time, but their short-lived victory only adds to their shame and punishment.

Suppose the French could land upon our shores, and take a few villages or a town on the coast, they would probably dance, and vaunt, and sing of victory till you came up; but when they fell a sacrifice to their rashness, their late victory would only bring bitter reflection. Yet this is but a faint picture of many profane boasters, who will awake at death to everlasting remorse, after being mocked here with short-lived victories!

But a real Christian knows of a Victory of a more high and lasting nature; and, in sight of death, can say, with the Apostle, 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ:' 1 Cor. xv, 57. This is a Victory, which never mocks the Christian Soldier: for, after conquering other enemies, he conquers Death itself. He may say, without fear of disappointment, 'I have fought the good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness:' 2 Tim. iv, 7, 8.

The Bible is the Book of Victory. But the time would fail me if I were to tell you of those Soldiers of God recorded in it, who, 'through faith, subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight,' as I hope you will do now, 'the armies of the aliens:' Heb. xi, 33, 34.

But I pray you recollect, that, when the Apostle tells of the great things which they did, he also tells us again and again *how* they did these great things; namely, by *faith*, that is, by *confidence in their* FRIEND.

"But," perhaps you will say, "these are things of old time."

Indeed and in truth, my good friend, they are the things of *every* time; for God hath never left himself without witness. Have I not just told you of a Soldier now living, who is a man of the very same stamp with those of old time? I know others, and have heard of many more, who have gotten the True Victory.

After I had written you this letter, I received an account of one of these who is lately dead. I will give you a short extract from it.

James Ruddy was born in Ireland. He had served

in the East Indies, and was afterwards appointed to the garrison at Hull. His health having declined apace through intemperance, it pleased God to impress his heart with a sense of his dangerous condition as a sinner.

Do you ask what is meant by this? I say such thoughts as these came into his mind:—"What if I have been true to my King and Country, have I not lived a rebel against the King of Kings? Have I not broken his law—joined his enemies—and despised his mercy? How shall I meet him in judgment? Where will my poor soul be, while they bury my body with military honours?—shut up in darkness, pain, and disgrace!"

In this way he passed many a heavy hour; till he sent for the worthy Chaplain of the garrison, who has published the account.

By his faithful Minister, he was led to the knowledge of his Almighty Friend, and taught all that I have been endeavouring to teach you.

Burdened as he had been by guilt, he now began to lay hold on the promises of the Gospel. He became resigned to his afflictions, yea thanked God for them. He spoke of his former sins with abhorrence; and earnestly exhorted his former companions in sin to repent and turn to God.

He would listen to none, whose conversation tended to puzzle and unsettle him; but was very thankful to those, who helped and edified him.

He showed an affectionate concern for his wife; commending her to God, and praying for her Salvation.

He was neither impatient of suffering, nor afraid of dying; but was comforted and supported with those views which carried him beyond the grave, and, in triumphant confidence, he often repeated, that as soon as his breath should leave the body, his spirit would be present with the Lord.

When his disorder increased so much that he could converse no more with men, he conversed with his Saviour in fervent prayer; by whom he was supported, till a period was put to his sufferings on the last day of the year 1797.

And now, Soldiers let me ask thee, Is there any Victory like this? Others only hope to conquer one Enemy; but this man conquered *all*. Others only hope to conquer while they live; but this man conquered most gloriously when he died. Death to him was but passing from a conflict to a crown. The victory of others gains but a *mite*, and lasts but for a *moment;* but this man won 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:' 2 Cor. iv, 17.

Before I conclude this letter, and as I never may have have an opprtunity of speaking to you again, I beseech you seriously to reflect that God has now brought that truth to your mind, by which you must one day stand or fall before his bar: I mean that important truth which I wish you to be conviced of before it is too late; namely, that you are a perishing sinner on the brink of Eternity—that your help is not in yourself, but in Christ, to whom I have been directing you for pardon, peace, and complete Salvation. He alone can give you a *new heart* and a *right spirit*, that you may henceforth live like a Christian, and no more return to folly. Whoever *carries* the truth to a man, it is God that *sent* it. And the truth that does not save a man, will be a witness against him.

"But," say you, "can such a man as I hope to obtain the same victory?"

Why not?—The same friend by which the men I have been telling you of, gained their victory is now calling you to 'look unto him and be saved: Is. xlv, 22.

Every one of them that are saved was as far from salvation once as you can be now.

But it began with a SERIOUS THOUGHT: such as,

"What am I about?—What shall I do in the end thereof?—How shall I meet death?—How shall I stand in judgment?—How shall I endure the sentence, 'Go ye cursed into everlasting fire?' "

This went on to a HOLY DESIRE; such as, "O wretch man! who shall deliver me? Oh that I could return to that God whom I have offended—Oh that I might have his favour!"

It then proceeded to a SECRET PRAYER; such as, 'God be merciful to me a sinner—Teach me thy way, O Lord!'

And all the rest, which you have heard of, followed in them as a fruitful tree rises up from a little seed, or as a Church begins with a single stone.

The man, that looks to Heaven for help, should despair of nothing. The 'battle' then 'is not ours, but God's:' 2 Chron. xx, 15, being confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Phil. *i*, 6.

Go forth then, Soldier, in the strength of the Lord, and in the power of his might; and you shall join those conquerors who are now singing an eternal song of Victory. In the mean time I will leave you a verse or two of the CXLIVth Psalm; and may God the Holy Spirit enable you to sing it with grace in your heart!

FOR ever blessed be the Lord,
My SAVIOUR and my SHIELD:
He sends his SPIRIT with his Word,
To arm me for the Field.

When Sin and Hell their force unite.
He makes my Soul his Care;
Instructs me to the heav'nly Fight,
And guards me through the War.

A FRIEND and Helper so divine,
Shall my weak Courage raise:
He makes the glorious Vict'ry mine.
And his shall be the praise.

REASONS FOR REPOSE,

ADDRESSED TO

A CHRISTIAN

SUBJECT TO

TEMPORARY ALARMS

RESPECTING

THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES.

Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you...1 PET. iii, 15.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Lady, for whose private use this Letter was written, feels desirous that the relief, which it is calculated to afford, may not be confined to herself. She has, therefore, prevailed with the Friend from whom she received it, to allow her to publish it for the benefit of others.

REASONS FOR REPOSE.

Feb. 13, 1804.

DEAR MADAM:

I SUSPECT that much of the depression which you mentioned to me lately, proceeds from the present relaxing season. You are nervous; and have been of late much confined to your house. Solitude, also, as well as society, has its peculiar temptations. Probably Mr. ———, professionally engaged with his wonted energy, would smile at the apprehensions which disturb his wife, though he feels equally interested in the subject before us. But, certainly, there is something more than nerves and seasons to be considered, with respect to the minds of pious persons occasionally harassed with infidel objections. I spoke, indeed, only what occurred at the moment, in reply to your difficulty: yet, as you tell me that you received benefit from my observations, and now wish for the substance on paper, I will endeavour to recollect what I then said.

I remember to have begun by remarking, that the religious world has not been sufficiently instructed in the *Evidences* of Revelation; or, as to the ground on which thinking men receive the Bible as the Word of God. Young converts are so affected with the discovery of their lost condition, of the importance of salvation, and of the Scriptures as their only rule, that they are for proceeding as soon and as fast as possible. If they can but build rightly on the *foundation*, they have no question as to the foundation itself. And, indeed, if this foundation should never be called in question *afterwards*, all would be well; but I feel con-

vinced that something more than an *implicit* faith is necessary here: a merely traditional adherence to Scripture lies too much exposed to assaults, especially in such an age as this—an age, in which one can scarcely take up a daily print, or pass an hour in company, without meeting some remark which has a tendency, more or less, to sap the ground on which we stand.

I myself was once a professed infidel: that is, one who, carried away first by the love of sin, hoped the Bible might not be true. I then listened to such as were hardened enough to assert that it was not true: till, at length, I believed my own lie; and the vanity of appearing something like a philosopher, who had thrown off the traditions of the nursery, set me on propagating that lie. But when, like the prodigal, 'I came to myself,' I had many painful steps to tread back, and many difficult and intricate paths to retrace. I now wished that the Bible might be true, and was glad to receive help from any able guide who had written on its evidences. Grotius, Bishop Butler, and many others helped me to see, that he, who is acquainted with the evidence which God has annexed to his word, has not only every thing he can reasonably require, but that, as Mr. Soame Jenyns has remarked, he will find *it requires more faith to be a consistent Infidel than to be a Christian.*

But you ask, "Do you never feel a shake after all this inquiry and experience?" I answer. Now and then, an unexpected and malignant blast meets my mind, and obliges me to have recourse to my usual method. Perhaps, after what I have known and felt, I ought to repel it instantly as a temptation. Perhaps, at my standing, I ought not to honour such an assault with any examination at all. But I am not telling you what may be my *duty*, but what is my *practice*. Moreover, such is the frame of my mind, that I fear no other method than that which I take

would satisfy it. As soon, then, as an alarm is given, I cast the eye of my mind over the leading evidences of the Scriptures, of which I have an habitual recollection, and which I need not particularize in their order to *you*. I likewise contemplate *facts* and *experience*, and soon obtain repose. Like a man who is told that the foundation of his house is in danger, I call for the key of the vaults on which my dwelling stands. I light a candle, walk down stairs, and pass very deliberately through the arches: I examine very particularly the arch suspected; and, after having satisfied myself that the foundation remains perfectly safe, I walk up again, lock the door, hang up the key, put out the candle, and quietly go about my business, saying as I go, "*They may raise an alarm, but I find* ALL IS SAFE."

"Have you had occasion," say you, "often thus to go down?" Not very often. "Did you always return satisfied?" Always. "Then be so kind as to mention some part of that train of thinking from which this satisfaction arises."

Were I, Madam, conversing with an avowed *Infidel*, it would be proper to bring forward a regular statement of the evidences of Revelation: but this will not be necessary here; especially as your present request respects only those considerations which generally satisfy *my own mind*.

I shall begin with informing you, that I cannot look around me, without being struck with the Analogy observable in the works of God. I find the Bible written in the style of his other books of Creation and Providence. The pen seems in the same hand. I see it, indeed, write, at times, mysteriously in each of these books; but I know that mystery in the works of God is only another name for *my ignorance*. The moment, therefore, that I become humble, all becomes right.

I observe nothing coming from the hand of man

like the Scriptures, in majesty of wisdom, in sanctity or simplicity: especially in marking the distinctions between right and wrong; and that too at a time when the most enlightened of the pagan world were confounding them. When I look into the theology of the heathen (that is of all without the light of Revelation) I find the greatest errors, and often the most extravagant fables, pervading their best systems: but, upon turning to the Bible, it seems to be said again, "LET THERE BE LIGHT." Here, alone, I find the true God: and discover his real character from his own declarations and dispensations. The altar raised to an "*Unknown God*" stands a monument of the blindness and wretchedness of the worshippers: But, in the Bible, I see 'Glory' is given 'to God in the highest; peace on earth' is revealed; and 'good will to men' so expressly points out the *means* of this peace, that, if these means were universally adopted, the present "Bedlam of the Universe" must be immediately changed into a happy state of order, truth, and love. Of this I can no more doubt, than I can doubt that I am at this moment endeavouring to recollect our morning conversation.

The Bible also contains the true history of man; so that there is not a word in his mouth, nor a thought in his heart, but its Author knew them altogether. Well, therefore, might one say, "Give me a Bible and a candle in the deepest dungeon, and I will tell you all that is going on in the world." In this book only, I see the real character and deep malignity of that disorder in creation called *Sin*, fully exposed. I see also a holy law, by which it must be tried. I see the infinite worth of that soul of man, on which sin acts as a fatal poison. I am able to see so much of the eternal world, as to form a just estimate of the present. I am here taught my real *wants* and *resources*.—But what benighted views had the wisest among the heathen of these most important truths! Well might

he say, "Either God must send a special teacher, or man must for ever remain in ignorance."

I see also in this Sacred Record, a Redemption or Recovery suited to my fallen state; and that, in this recovery, God has not only consulted the need of his creature man, but also the honour of his own character and government. But, in his conducting of the concerns of an infinite government, I do not stumble at finding that 'God's thoughts' are not as 'my thoughts.'

I see the means of this recovery pointed out to man at his fall; and expressly held forth by *prophecy*, during a course of four thousand years: and that, by a succession of pious men, of various ranks, ages, and nations; and living under different dispensations; incapable, therefore, of *concerting* a plan, though perfectly harmonizing in their grand object. I cannot conceive how this harmony could be produced but by inspiration of God.

Such a union in prediction, and such exact correspondence in events, together with the fulfilment of the *other* predictions contained in this book, I view as a STANDING MIRACLE to this day in proof of its inspiration.

We need not go to the New Testament to learn the history of Christ and his kingdom. An ancient record, scrupulously preserved through ages by his present enemies the Jews, foretells the time, place, and manner of his birth; the circumstances of his life, rejection, miracles, death, and resurrection! the subjects of his kingdom; its progress, opposition, and victory. Nor did this chain of prophecy close on his appearing; for he expressly declared what should follow on his gospel being rejected by the Jews: he gave an exact description of the overthrow of their Church and State; together with a declaration of the events of his own kingdom to the end of the world. Every other book is perfectly dark on these most important of all

truths: but, on opening this book, by far the most ancient in the world, I see them all expressly set before me.

Nor is this grand event notified only by prophets. To keep alive and direct the expectation which had been raised, I observe a long train of emblems or types instituted. 'Shadows of good things to come' were kept up, and special tokens of the divine presence were afforded, until SHILOH came, to whom it had long been predicted that 'the nations should be gathered.'

In the fulness of time I see SHILOH come. And I perceive the broad seal of heaven in 'signs, wonders, and mighty deeds,' set to his mission. So grand a design is worthy of such an attestation. Omnipotence could find no difficulty in producing it: and the witnesses are unimpeachable. Bad men could not invent such a *character* as Christ: good men could not attest *falsehood*. A number of pious and consistent witnesses could neither be deceived themselves, nor deceive others, as to the facts which they had seen, which they recorded, and which they stood ready to seal with their blood. They could appeal to whole churches, as living witnesses of the continuance of this seal. Even the infidels of *that* day did not attempt to deny the facts, however absurdly they attempted to account for them.

Nor can I reasonably object to this knowledge as coming by the testimony of others: for has not God appointed that the greatest part of my knowledge can be received no other way, than by the report of competent and credible witnesses? I have no doubt at all of the existence of Rome or Constantinople; and yet what more do I know of these cities than by report? and what doubt have I of their existence? Cases of life and death are every day determined by the evidence of testimony. In the gospel history, and in the effects following, I have all the evidence which the

case admits, and all which an humble mind will require.

I find also this testimony attended with that *accidental* and *circumstantial* evidence, which attaches only to truth. A number of simple witnesses state facts, many of which had passed in the presence of multitudes as well as of themselves. They make no comment: they court no prejudices: they conceal no failings: they obviate no probable objections. They also maintain this testimony, not only without a single worldly motive, but against all worldly hope.

I perceive the reverse of this in the opposers of the truth. From that day to this, art, malignity, falsehood, and an evident hatred to the humble and holy principles of the Gospel, appear on the very face of their opposition. And yet I can gather honey from the carcases of these Lions. *Josephus*, the Jew, and *Tacitus*, the Pagan, confirm the history of Christ, and the fulfilment of his prophecies. *Suetonius* and *Pliny*, *Celsus* and *Porphery*, while they pursue their secular projects, and occasionally express their malignity against Christianity, confirm the very facts on which I build my hope. Such is the uniformity of truth that it derives evidence from its very opposers.

Besides this diversity of evidence arising from such opposite characters, I cannot but know the astonishing moral change which took place in a great part of the world; and that it took place upon setting forth the character, teaching, miracles, passion, and resurrection of Christ. This is another standing monument of truth and its victories. The strong-holds of pride, prejudice, policy, power, and philosophy, were pulled down—by what? By arts or arms? by carnal policy or worldly prospects? No. The 'weapons of this warfare were not carnal, but spiritual;' yet I see them 'mighty through God to the pulling down these strong-holds.' I see them doing this, not only in barbarous nations: but in the most enlightened on earth:

not only the poor and illiterate acknowledged and died for the truth, but men of eminence and science could not resist its evidence; and therefore declared, that 'what things had once been gain to them, they now counted loss for Christ.'

As it is evidently the design of Revelation to recover an alienated creature to his God, so I am penetrated with the Wisdom and Grace discovered in suiting the means of recovery to the apostacy of fallen man. The scripture method of recovery accommodates itself to man. as he *is;* not, as he might have been. It comes down to his state and case. however desperate. It aims, by every means to win his heart. as well as to alarm his conscience. Man, like Adam. flies from the voice of his God to some hiding-place. but the voice follows him: 'O Israel. thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.' Sottish Man would stop his ears to the voice of his friend; but 'God thundereth marvellously' in them. He falls among thieves; but the Good Samaritan pities him. binds up his wounds, and provides for his wants. He is still prone to wander like a silly sheep; but the Good Shepherd restores him. and 'beseeches him to be reconciled.' The offer of such a friendship confounds him: he feels troubled at the strange proposal—

"Dwells in all Heaven Charity so dear?"

the Good Shepherd layeth down his life to prove it.

When I contemplate the authentic and unbroken channel, through which this Sacred Record is brought to my hand; the various translations which have preserved it entire from the first ages; its marvellous preservation under every attempt to destroy it; the jealousy of opposite sects, watching over each other on any attempt to corrupt it; the attestation of its bitterest enemies to all its important facts. corroborated by *their* character, as well as that of its friends and adherents: when I regard the rites and ordinances set

up at the time to commemorate those facts, and which stand as monuments recording them to this day; when I behold the present state of the Jews, and mark their still obstinate adherence to that very record which has so long and so expressly foretold the state in which I see them—I say whenever I contemplate these particulars, I feel overwhelmed with evidence: I say to myself, "'The word of the Lord is tried: a cunningly devised fable' will stand no such test." And I am, by necessity, brought to the following dilemma:—Either that 'this record is true;' or, that it must be strangely determined, in providence, that 'the sincere and diligent seeker of truth shall inevitably be deceived.'

But I cannot for a moment admit the latter supposition: for I dare not think of God but as holy, just, and good; and as 'a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.' But to suppose that He, who foresees, directs, and governs every event, would concur in the propagation of a plausible lie; that this lie should be attended with strong and various evidences; that it should be so like a ray from heaven, a light shining in a dark place, a balm to the wounded, a direction to the humble inquirer, and a way of holiness to the ungodly—to suppose, I say, that God would permit all this, in full view of its deceiving the seeker of truth, and mocking and disappointing those who desire above all things to serve and glorify Him! verily, such a supposition tends to blasphemy! it supposes the Most Holy to act like a demon! and it implies that infidels and profligates are the only children of light and liberty! Some object to mysteries: but what mystery in the Bible is to be compared with that, which must follow on such a supposition?

I see, at this day, the very opposers of the Gospel stand among the proofs of it. The vagrant and stumbling *Jew*—the supercilious *Greek*—the disputatious *Heretic*—the sneering *Infidel*—the loose *Pro-*

fessor—all these become involuntary witnesses that the Author of this Book is a searcher of hearts. He has expressly written their history, and accurately drawn their characters, before they were born; and, were not such characters afterward to appear, the Scriptures would be unintelligible.

I find some simple believers in danger of being overborne by the insolence, with which the men of this world treat the counsel of God, and those who fear him: a blind majority alarms them. They are not aware, also, how plausibly an artful sophist can darken and confound the clearest evidence. For my part, I see only what might naturally be expected. Would it not be strange if these birds of night did not hate the morning? if they did not endeavour to shut out its beams? Was I not one of them? Am I not in their secret? Did I not once speak as they do now? and, do I not know the reason?

"Whatsoever is received," says the old maxim, "will be received according to the nature of the recipient." He, that feels his guilt and danger, will be ready to say, "This Gospel is what I needed, but could not have contrived; but, being revealed, it exactly suits my case." Thus 'the hungry will be filled with good things,' while 'the rich will be sent empty away.' This pillar of fire and cloud, which brings light and shade to an *Israelite*, occasions darkness and destruction to an *Egyptian*. The Gospel becomes a trial of men's spirits; and, by it, 'the thoughts of many hearts are revealed.' The man, who loathes his dungeon, will gladly take this Lamp, and explore his way to liberty; while another, who loves his bondage, will only dispute or slumber by it.

It is as impossible for me to doubt that 'light is come into the world,' as to doubt that of which I have daily proof, namely, that 'men love darknesss rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' I plainly see the reason why the Bible is not universally

received with joy. How mean a revelation, compared with the Scriptures, would that be, which could teach men how their present propensities might be gratified! and yet a book that could point out this, would soon be translated into *all languages*, and find its way over the *whole earth*.

The confined reception of truth is the *natural result* of the extent of human depravity. I have a clear conviction, that spiritual Food, Medicine, and durable Riches are freely proposed to a multitude wherever the Gospel comes: but some of them will not so much as hearken to the proposal: some just venture to touch and taste it, as if they suspected it would poison them. I see this continually. And yet while I see this, do I not also see this very same multitude ready to flock round every vile mountebank who solicits their attention? They will not only hearken to *his* rant, but throw up their shillings for his packets, and swallow them, nothing doubting. 'Who hath believed our report?' complains a prophet: or, in other words, Who will not believe any one—except his true and only infallible Physician?

But, notwithstanding the prevalence of this kingdom of darkness, I see also a 'kingdom of heaven,' not only *foretold*, but actually *set up*, in this world. Time, which has swept away in their turn other ancient governments, has, from the days of Abel the righteous, to this day, witnessed a righteous and permanent Kingdom established in the hearts of the faithful; one, exactly of the same nature, and producing the same holy effects, in whatever age or nation it has been set up. Nothing fundamental has ever been changed in it; and its new form, under Christ, is but the flower or perfection of the whole dispensation. Even now may we say, 'Go and tell' every serious inquirer, that, in this Kingdom, the morally 'blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up.

and the poor have the gospel preached to them; and blessed is he who shall not be offended' at the Author and the Means. Nor does it need a moment's consideration, to determine whether these *moral* miracles, wrought on the immortal spirit of man, be not far more important than those *physical* ones, which were once wrought on his perishing body.

I feel no disposition to stumble at the mysteries of Revelation till I forget myself. He, who ventures beyond his depth, must be drowned. There are some truths in my own affairs, which, however I state them to my children, must appear to them strange and incredible: could they be presented to the intellect of a fly, they must appear much more so. There is, however, some proportion between the intellect of a man and that of a fly; but no proportion at all, between that which is *finite* and that which is *infinite*. In viewing, therefore, the scheme of redemption, I seem like one viewing a vast and complicated machine of exquisite contrivance: what I comprehend of it is wonderful; what I do not, is perhaps more so still.

I have repeated proof, that, in venturing into the presumptuous path of the first Adam, I soon lose myself in disorder and darkness; but, in following the lowly footsteps of the Second Adam, I find the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life*.

Nothing appears to me more extravagant than the folly and madness of that man, who can trifle with considerations on which his eternal interests depend. He *must* soon quit his hold of present things: he *must* soon enter another world: the grand question therefore is, does any thing present itself like footing in the abyss before him? Can a floating atom adhere to any thing like substance? I see one ground of hope only, on which I can venture; and could I be deceived in the attempt, I should be but as others. Like the dove, therefore, which 'went to and fro, but found no rest for her foot till she returned to the Ark:' so, af-

ter trying other means of rest, I am reduced from necessity to flee to that only Rest and Refuge set before me in the Gospel.

I observe a sort of evidence of the truth of Christianity, which none but a Christian can have, and which partly depends upon a moral *Taste*. Like a man who has an ear for music, a Christian will perceive harmony and sweetness, where another, who has not this taste, will find nothing but noise. When a multitude were gathering to drag the Apostle to prison for preaching the truth, an individual receives and obeys this truth as the means of salvation. How is this? Had she a better understanding than the rest? No such reason is given: but it is said that 'the Lord OPENED HER HEART, that she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul.' Verily, we must know that 'there is a path which the Vulture's eye hath not seen, and which no' such 'fowl knoweth:' and, what seems more extraordinary, we know that such cannot, or will not, see this path, after all imaginary pains have been taken to show it to them.

A Christian has also evidence of *Experience:* like that of a man, who has long dwelt in a house which another has only walked round, and examined on the outside. The external observer may question whether any thing is to be found in the house at which he looks; but it is much too late for *us* to doubt, who have long inhabited the dwelling: *we* cannot UNKNOW what we have known: *we* cannot but have the clearest conviction, that, till we were brought into this house, we were destitute of the shelter, provisions, and comforts which we now enjoy, and of which we are so desirous that others should be partakers. Now, though this, as well as some of the before-mentioned arguments, cannot properly be urged on the conscience of an infidel, we certainly ought to take the benefit of it to ourselves.

'Behold the days come,' saith the Lord, 'in which

I will perform that good thing, which I have promised to the house of Israel.' Here I feel, that, if no one beside myself could be a witness of the fulfilment of this promise, I must be utterly abandoned to falsehood if I did not acknowledge the accomplishment of it in my own state and heart.

'Whatsoever doth make manifest is light:' but we have a conviction in our breasts, amounting to moral certainty, that it is only by the light of Revelation that we have been enabled to appreciate justly *other* things, and discern their true colour, worth, and importance. Instructed by this, we perceive, that if modern moralists reason better than their pagan forefathers, it is because they are born under a brighter day, and borrow from it those very assistances which their depravity often employs against it. We cannot but recollect, that, when our hearts became humble, the light of Revelation, like that of the sun, brought its own evidence with it; insomuch, that, when Christ spake to us by his word, he seemed to say to us, as he once said to the man whose eyes he opened, 'I that speak unto thee, am He.'

The instruction, which a Christian receives from this great Teacher, makes all he sees *without* and feels *within* both natural and accountable; and his Teacher's counsel also shows him WHAT TO DO in the case. But, without such help, he feels like one driven out to sea without rudder or compass; and who, for any thing he knows to the contrary, may be dashed to pieces in a moment.

Necessity felt, and Help received, become an argument at hand with Christians in every station. Thus the believing poor feel the use and worth of the Scriptures as an illiterate Mariner feels the use and worth of his Compass. The Mariner, perhaps, has neither curiosity nor capacity enough to inquire why his needle takes a polar direction; or, what the learned have to say on its observed variations in different parts of the

globe: he knows nothing of the laws of magnetism, why iron and not lead should be the recipient of it, when or by whom it was discovered, or to what variety of purposes it may be applied; but this man knows, illiterate as he is, that it is by this needle only that he finds his way through a trackless ocean: he knows, that, by this alone, he has escaped many dangers, and obtained many deliverances: he knows he can proceed safely, only as he is directed by it; or take rest, only as he attends to it; and that it will bring him home to his family and friends at last. Thus the Poor take the benefit of Revelation, though they are not able accurately to maintain theories, nor answer questions respecting it, as a scholar might.

The value of a thing is sometimes best discovered by observing the effects resulting from the want of it. When I have beheld the desperate malignity of an unbeliever whom I have visited in his dying moments, and have seen him spurn at the only help and kindness that could be afforded him in such circumstances:— or when I have laboured to convince a silly young creature, intoxicated with vanity, sunk in sensuality, deaf to counsel, and plunging into ruin: when I say I have looked on such men, could I doubt for a moment as to what a reception of the Gospel would do for them? I stand assured that it would pluck a brand from the burning; that it would bring a madman to his senses; that it would change a devil into an angel. Can I doubt, after such an assurance, whether this same Gospel be true, and the appointed remedy of God?

Not that a bare assent to the letter of this divine record will produce any such effects. You and I, Madam, know too many who believe the History of of the Bible as firmly as they believe the History of England, and with much the same effect. Such a faith as this will only witness against them. There needs a Teacher, as well as a Book; an influence, as well as a light. "The gospel," as one observes,

"is a mighty engine for raising the fallen nature of man; but God must have the working of it."

But, whatever use man makes of this standard of truth, the standard itself remains fixed, tried, and unimpaired. When I take down a great author, such as Lord Bacon, I find that time has discovered many errors, and rendered obsolete many positions, to be found in that most comprehensive of human minds. But I see that Time can take nothing from the Bible. I find it a *living* monitor. I feel convinced that I might have escaped all my errors through life, had I paid attention to its admonitions. Like the sun, it is the same in its light and influence to man *this day*, which it was ages ago. It can meet every present inquiry; it can console under every present loss: and it can become, in God's hand, a daily exciting cause of growth and comfort.

But on the supposition that we had not such firm footing for our hope and comfort as has been stated: yet even then, a man, who was not tied and bound by depraved habits or inveterate prejudices would surely avoid the edge of a precipice. He would say, "In order that I may not make a mistake which cannot afterwards be rectified, I will keep as far as possible from danger. It surely becomes me to act in matters of the *last* importance with the precaution which I use in matters of the *least* importance. In matters of such moment, I must avoid even *hazard*."

'Fools make a mock at sin:' but sin appears, from experience as well as from the Scripture, to be an infinite evil. I see it now convulsing the nation. I am shocked at its cruelty and outrages as I pass the streets. It deranges my family. It disorders my worship. It pollutes and torments my heart. I can form, indeed, no right judgment how it may become infinite justice to treat this evil; but I can take the JUDGE'S OWN ACCOUNT. I can take warning when he declares repeatedly that he will bring the

impenitent to a state 'where the worm dieth not and where the fire is not quenched.' I can take divine counsel how to avoid these awful consequences. I can take the *safe side:* and in so doing, I am sure of losing nothing, even if it could be proved that I should gain nothing.

We cannot avoid perceiving a distinct class of men, who, from the beginning of time, were taught and disposed to serve the living and true God: we cannot help marking the *identity* of their character, and the *superiority* of their views; their zeal for truth and their daily anxiety to improve under its direction. Nor can we avoid perceiving the rest of mankind, drowned in cares or pleasures; either casting off all fear of God, or becoming the blind dupes of some contemptible superstition. Nor can we hesitate a moment to which of these two divisions of mankind we should join ourselves?

As a foolish youth, who knows not how to prize the privileges of his father's house, care, and counsel, seeks the friendship of some dangerous stranger: thus, on taking umbrage at something met with in the Church, I have petulantly walked into the World for relief. Happy for me! what I met there soon convinced me that I must make the best of my way back again. I found hypocrisy and farce in the Church: in the World I found nothing else; and pure truth and solid consolation, only in the Bible.

Happy also for us, if by any means we are brought to receive the truth in time. On my first coming into our neighbourhood, one, who possessed a considerable estate in it, was not satisfied with jocosely expressing his own infidelity, but thought he complimented me by insinuating, that, secretly, I was of his sentiment. A mortification in his bowels soon after made him serious, and *then* he discovered his fatal mistake. He sent for me in the greatest anxiety, but too late for conversation. The agony, however,

of his mind when dying reminded me of that observation, "*Hell is truth seen too late.*"

And is this all that the god of this world can give his servants for believing his lie? One thing more, perhaps, he may add:—the *opiate* of a stupid conscience to make them die quietly. But I cannot be content with such wages. Annihilation, which is the Unbeliever's *best* hope, is the Christian's *worst* fear. He alone stands a candidate for an enduring *substance*: the Bible alone purposes it: and what has the world to offer, in its sophistries or satisfactions, which should dissuade him one moment from thus standing?

On the other hand I see a wild fanatic mangling the Scriptures, till some are ready to call them in question: but I see no question arise from hence. Had this deluded creature ceased to follow his imagination, and trod the humble and practical path of his guide, he would have ceased to be a fanatic.

Nor am I a whit more stumbled at the hypocrite. Like Simon Magus, I see him paying homage to excellence, while he has 'no part nor lot in the matter.' Like a spurious miracle, he derives all his credit from those that are true; as a counterfeit coin or note would deceive none, if true had never existed. "Tell me not," said your old friend Mrs. —— to her relation, "how many hypocrites you find in the Church. I tell you I know I am not one myself; and that is enough for me."

To set before you the objections which have been made to Revelation, and the satisfactory answers which have been repeatedly given and are in every body's hands, would be but to trifle with your time. And, indeed, were not such solutions at hand, we know that a well-founded fact is not to be overthrown, because objections may be started against it, which we are not prepared to answer. Many of us, who have been objectors, know also that the 'carnal mind, which is enmity against God,' lies at the root of such objec-

tions; and that those, 'who receive not the love of the truth,' are in the way to be punished with that 'strong delusion of believing a lie.'

> Hear the just laws, the judgment of the skies!
> He, that hates truth, shall be the dupe of lies.
> And he, that *will* be cheated to the last,
> Delusions, strong as hell, shall bind him fast.

In this way, Madam, has God enabled me hitherto to examine my foundation. Or, if I may be allowed at the conclusion to change the metaphor, I stand like one, who, for a long time, has been imposed upon by toys and tinsel; but, at length, feels satisfied that he has found *gold*. Some, indeed, try to persuade me that I am still imposed upon, and that what I take for gold is but base metal. I therefore proceed to prove my gold, by every method of trial which I can devise: I put it into the *scale:* I try it in the *fire:* I bring it to the *touchstone:* I place it under the *hammer:* and I find it still *pure gold*. After all this, shall I regard their cry who have never *thus* tried it; and whose fears and lusts oppose the trial?

At your request, I have now put down the substance of my unconnected remarks; and since, in that form, they afforded you relief in *discourse*, I have avoided giving them a more regular one in *paper*. I have also been sparing of practical inferences from the truth thus established; as I need not demonstrate to You, what *Reasons for Action* must necessarily arise from these *Reasons for Repose*. You are also fully aware that the Truth before us must be infinitely momentous, or nothing: that it cannot be *nothing*, we have full proof in our own breasts: infinitely momentous therefore it must remain, and such may we ever feel it!

But, after all these considerations, I cannot expect *you* will ever have so strong a conviction of the energy of divine truth as our venerable friend Mr. N——, or as myself. Like the demoniac *Legion*, we must needs sit with more admiration in our right minds at

Christ's feet, than Lydia did. Yet I feel comfort in speaking to a Christian on this subject, since we can both, like David, 'enter in the Sanctuary' in order to clear up our doubts, and behold the end of those who will not follow us thither. We have 'the witness in ourselves,' when a mist, like that which lately overspread your mind, does not rise to obscure it. For, whether the world will believe it or not, we know there is such a thing as a *Common Sense* among the real disciples of Christ—a heart-felt conviction and experience of the truth of the Gospel. We know that nothing did us good till we received that Gospel: that, till then, we had no well-grounded hope in view of affliction, death, and judgment. I must repeat the term *well-grounded*, because an *ill*-grounded confidence is worse than none at all.

With a mind fully made up on the subject, 'all the days of my appointed time' I hope to 'wait till my change come.' Such a change we all know must soon take place in every one of us; but a strange infatuation leads fallen man, like one walking in his sleep toward a precipice, to plunge into the abyss before him, without so much as inquiring whither he is going, or how he may go safely. On the contrary, as one *awake*, I would anticipate the change before it takes place: I would provide against it: I would descend to the grave, taking hold of the Almighty Hand stretched out for my help: crying, as I descend, 'Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope.'

Till then, as we cannot but pity such as slight these Results of our Inquiry, so let us also pray for them; endeavouring, by every step in our conduct, still further to demonstrate the *more excellent way*. And, permit me to add, that, till then,

I must, remain, Dear Madam,
Your affectionate Friend,
And faithful Servant.

R. C.

A

FRAGMENT,

WRITTEN

IN AN ILLNESS, IN THE YEAR 1799.

As a traveller, who has left his house but a few hours, finds himself in an entirely new situation; so, shut up for a few hours in a sick bed, and with a prospect of death, I look backward and forward, and seem in a new world. I feel the truths which I have taught, in a way I never before felt them. I marvel at the stupidity of man, and most of all at my own stupidity. I desire to live, only that I may live and act under the impressions that I now have, as I clearly perceive nothing else worth living for.

I just now called for one to help me, who would go through fire and water to do it; but received no answer. What a mercy that *He*, who always can help me, always hears me when I call!

I feel many sweet and strong ties to the present life, in my family and in my Church, to which all earthly possessions bear no comparison; yet 'to depart and be with Christ is' doubtless 'far better.' But I have been this morning perplexed with the consideration, that when I 'shall see him as he is,' I shall not be able to forgive myself for not having served him better. I know not how to separate the idea of self-reproach from heavenly enjoyment.

Our three grand enemies are the World, the Flesh, and the Devil: but we are sure to conquer; for 'greater is he that is in us, than they that be against us!'

Sitting in my blankets, with this Bible before me, I seem like old Elwes with a bushel of bank notes and India bonds; but with this difference, that he must have his all taken away, and I shall take all mine with me.

I am astonished, and even confounded, when I recollect with what prodigality we Ministers are accustomed to waste our time. A Minister spending his strength and talents merely to entertain his acquaintance, is a 'Foolish Virgin' wasting her oil to light up a puppet show. I purpose, in the strength of God, that the few drops which I have remaining, shall be consecrated to the lighting of wanderers to the Door, or pilgrims on their Way.

The moment my soul departs from this body, it will be more separate from the present world in which I live, than if it were at this instant placed beyond the orb of Saturn; and yet, at the orb of Saturn, what a mere non-entity would this present world be! But, to be placed at such an inconceivable distance from my present station, and to be there *alone*, though out of absolute pain, shocks the mind: on the other hand, to be there, or any where else, under a sense of divine favour, and with the presence of Christ, makes that state no *solitude*, and this world no *loss*.

I have had a view, in my sickness, that I never had before; respecting those Opiates which have kept me in a doze at least, where I ought to have been broad awake. Arts and sciences, literature, curiosities, news, and even nonsense, have wasted hours and days; and that, while I had a most important charge to be executed, and a soul to be prepared for this season. I see all this with a clearness that fills me, at once, with wonder, indignation, and abasement. Should I live, ought I not to proclaim it upon the house top? and especially to those who are dosing to this hour?

When *H* said to me, by the physicians, 'Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live;' and especially when one of them told me this with many

tears; my soul, like a man suddenly overwhelmed with an inundation, looked about hastily, to examine the ground on which it stood to meet the unexpected trial. But the ground was found in a moment to be such, as could secure me from any flood; and I was enabled to reply, "My Dear Friend, you do not at all alarm me; for 'I know whom I have believed,' and 'I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him unto that day.'" But, in going home by myself in the coach, and looking from off the Rock on which I stood, to the waves which surrounded it, my calmness forsook me: I thought of my wife and children, and burst into tears: not that I doubted but they would be taken care of by him who had all my life taken care of me, but I could not bear the thought of parting with them, much less of leaving them in such a world. I thought too of my Church; and felt that I had not time left even to make such a settlement as that I could leave it with satisfaction. The whole was too much, and I was obliged to turn my eyes again from the waves to the Rock, and, for the present, transact with God for my own soul.

From having possessed great natural vigour, and a good constitution, I had strangely and preposterously imagined, that I should live to be old: and have often pleased myself with a fond idea of discoursing to my congregation from St. John's pulpit, in a familiar, affectionate, and parental manner, with a head as white as snow. And this delusion had proceeded so far, that I almost took it for granted it would be so: and had imagined the sort of discourses which I should deliver at that time, with the tone of voice, and necessary imperfections! What upon earth, could make me so blind and forgetful of the nature of man, and the express admonition of our Lord? And this, too, after I had been *writing* "*Memoirs of the late Rev. Mr. Cadogan*," taken off in a few days at nearly *my own age*.

The Master had said, 'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.—And if he shall come in the SECOND watch, or come in the THIRD watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.—Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour WHEN YE THINK NOT.' Strange delusion of my heart! I said, He will not come to me till the end of the *last* watch, therefore I have twenty years, at least to live. O my soul! hast thou been so long 'a Teacher of others, and teachest thou not thyself?

How does nature, after all, overcome the best train of reasoning! After setting my house in order, with a prospect that my place at St. John's would be supplied by a better than myself, and that my wife and children would neither be forgotten in heaven or earth; I began to be quite composed, and to invent many reasons why it might be best to go at *this* time: —The Lord might see some evil coming on, from which I was to be snatched: I might fall into some snare, and dishonour the Gospel: above all, his will, his goodness, his promise would be a sufficient security for good, if he should take me *now*.—In the midst of this my little daughter Catharine came in, and pulling aside the curtain, asked me how I did. Her smiling countenance, unconscious of what a convulsion was taking place awakened fresh and distinct sensations. I turned my eyes upward, like Hezekiah, 'O Lord, I am oppressed: undertake for me!' Leave not that child a fatherless wanderer in such a world as this!"

O affliction! when sent to instruct, thou becomest a deep and faithful casuist! Of many past transactions and present habits, I said "It is NOTHING:" or, "It is SETTLED." Thou bringest the book again before me. What errors in the account! What blindness in the adjustment! Poor Bankrupt! I said I was 'rich, and increased in goods;' and behold I am 'miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.' Who is the man, that, in health and spirits, abounds in his own sense, and in

self-satisfaction? He may, perhaps, live to learn that his God can make an affliction present such views in one day, as a whole life of contemplation and study would never have afforded.

Besides the encouragements and assurances given in the Scriptures to prayer, my own experience will stand a terrible witness against me, if I should ever cease to pray. I cannot allow myself to put down the remarkable answers which I have had to prayer, lest I should stumble the weak, or provoke the scornful. I know not when I ever prayed in earnest, that in one way or other, I had not satisfactory evidence that God heareth prayer. Ten thousand times hath he reproached unbelief, by saying, 'Here I am—Why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith!' And, so strong is this evidence to me when I examine the detail, that I see and feel that he said it not in vain, 'If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what YE WILL, AND IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO YOU.'

I now feel capable of instructing myself in former periods, as if I were talking to a giddy child. I feel ready to seize the arm of the silly wanderer, on this and that occasion: as one without a monitor or guide: and of saving it from its mad projects and impoverishing habits. Who can estimate the value of such a monitor? But had I none?—Ah how superior a one had I at all times, to what I could now prove! O slighted Bible! I feel—I feel that every deviation from the right way, every foolish and wicked thing which I have said or done, has been owing to a disregard of thy counsel: every misery and mischief, into which I have fallen, has been through a neglect of thy warning! How true is that saying, in my own experience—'Oh that thou hadst hearkened unto me, then had thy peace been like a river!' What peace would now remain, were it not for the Gospel? The ignorance and unbelief of the multitude may cause them to pass it as a barren Rock;—I, like a traveller over-

taken by a storm, am glad to flee to it and to be safe: and, entering in, I find honey, one drop of which exceeds the world's highest enjoyments.

If we say, with the Apostle, 'all things work together for good to them that love God,' we must not forget to take in the holy character of the great agent. What I mean is this:—I contend with my children on account of the evil that I see in them, but I often feel that I mean only their *good* in the correction. I do not think of the evil abstractedly as *evil*. But He, 'with whom we have to do,' will demonstrate to every conscience, soon or late, that his name is HOLY. He will bring forward to the conscience which he means to purify, its more refined as well as more gross offences. He will not only kill the cockatrice, but will crush its egg.

When at Bath, and in pain and weariness, I felt it would be a privilege to be dismissed from the arduous employment that lay before me; and wished some better Minister might take my place, while, with a small income, I might retire to some village near town, where I might read and write as I could, in quiet and at leisure. All this is done: I *am* dismissed; and I may retire, with a small competency, while a better man is ready to take my place. And now, like Rachel, I feel the loss of what I did not sufficiently prize! I feel, that, to pain and weariness, desolation and useless life, encumbering and encumbered, remains! O Lord, in mercy *withhold*, when I wish amiss, as well as grant that thou seest good, or I am undone!

To-day I would fain have assisted one, whose mind was perplexed with doubts; but soon found myself injured by speaking, and was therefore obliged to leave some things of importance unsaid. I trust I shall know, in future, the worth and design of speech, if ever I should be restored to it. Certain it is, that its failure brings a strong conviction of the abuse of this faculty. What an immense part of a short life has

been wasted in idle, and sometimes injurious discourse! as if speech was given for nothing but to waste time and dissipate the mind. I will thank God for sickness, if I learn nothing more from it than this.

Pain makes me peevish: so trifles and peevishness add to the pain. Thus sin haunts and darkens the gloom of a sick chamber. On the other hand, I have repeated conviction, that as I recover a spirit of faith and prayer, I become patient; and light and comfort even under pain, return.

Old man, be quiet! I hoped thou wast *dumb* here, though not *dead*. Thy proud speeches and angry replies are here as ridiculous as depraved. Am I such a fool, that after being brayed in the mortar of affliction, I must still proclaim to every one that I am a fool? O Divine Spirit! affliction may bruise and kill me, but thou only canst make me wise and holy.

There are blessed moments in which the soul, by converse with Christ and his eternal Kingdom, has such views, that the whole world below seems but one noisy impertinence. I heard somebody, at such a moment, come and discourse gravely on the news of Bonaparte. It then seemed too trifling to be thought of; but I know, that, to-morrow, I shall be asking after Bonaparte. Blessed moment (not far off) when I shall behold His glory!

> And flesh and sin no more control
> The sacred pleasures of the soul.

What would not a wise man willingly endure in his body, that his mind might recover its true tone, and a right sense of things? We are all more or less moral lunatics and prodigals, and may be thankful for any dispensation, that leads us to 'arise and go to our Father.'

O 'Emanuel, God with us!' if I did not see thee thus come down to us, and visit thine apostate creatures, invite them to return, and consecrate by thy blood 'a new and living way,' I might think of God, but with no proper ideas,—no hope nor interest.

fear that I should only fear; and, standing as I now do on the brink of eternity, I should tremble to my inmost soul. Glory to thy name! I can now, not only honour, but *hope*; not only trust, but *love*.

I detect a delusion, which I put down, lest I should fall into it again. I have, for many years, been conscious, that whoever was by *Mr. By-ends*, I was not. I felt that I acted no part: I was deeply convinced of the truth of what I taught: I spoke from experience: I meant most sincerely what I said; and felt that my secret contrivances and plans were even more pointed and direct for the interests of men than the public. But then, I so hugged this conscious integrity, that I allowed myself to play the fool—I allowed un unruly tongue to boast, to censure, and to complain. In short, this consciousness of honesty was to stand in the stead of the whole Law: and, like another Pope, grant dispensations to an indevout, unhumble, unwatchful, impatient, proud, and peevish spirit. My temptation was, "There goes a wolf in sheep's clothing! Thank God you are not like him. That is enough. It is no matter whether you are like Christ, and daily growing up into him in all things." Into such moral distempers many Christians fall: and from them nothing, I believe, but the special and express teachings of the Holy Spirit can deliver.

For a short space, I had a most lively view of the beauty and glory of Christ and his salvation. The 'Sun of Righteousness' arose on my soul 'with healing in his wings.' I felt not only a sense of pardon and peace, that exceeded all earthly joys; but was deeply convinced that all the pain I had sufferred, through the late dispensation, was in order to humble, and purify, and prepare me for himself and his kingdom. I shed tears of joy, till a roving imagination brought a certain ignorant and conceited professor before me, with whom I entered into a dispute for a few minutes, which left my heart cold and dead. I perceived my loss, and made

efforts to recover the former frame, but in vain. He seemed to say, "My visits must not be slighted."

'Return unto thy rest, O my soul:'—I feel this is the grand secret for obtaining peace, in a world of sin and sorrow. When the heart turns away from the confusions and disturbances to which it is continually exposed; and, taking wings, flies to the bosom of God:—when the voice of Christ, walking in the night on the troubled waters, is heard—'It is I, be not afraid:'—This is peace! And this, too, is his own direction for obtaining it: 'In the world ye shall have tribulation; but, in me, ye shall have peace. Be of good cheer: I have overcome the world.'

After so many years of uninterrupted activity, to be imprisoned, to be silenced, and almost incapable of writing or reading, is more wearisome than even the pain that often accompanies it. And yet hence the following instruction may be gathered:

1. How much activity belongs to some natures; and that this nature is often mistaken for grace.

2. How much we are called to suffer, as well as do, the will of God. When I have bid one of my children sit down quietly, and remain silent during my pleasure, I enjoin him a much more difficult task than the most active service; and yet I expected it to be done, because I ordered it. How is it, that I have not yet learnt to sit still when I am bid.

3. While life is wasting, and souls are perishing, I may yet earnestly plead, with the Psalmist, 'Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name.' I may sing with the poet,

"My stock lies dead, and no increase
Does my dull husbandry improve:
Oh let thy graces, without cease,
Drop from above!

"Death is still working like a mole,
And digs my grave at each remove:
Let Grace work too, and on my soul
Drop from above!

"Oh come, for thou dost know the way;
Or, if to me thou wilt not move,
Remove me where I need not say
Drop from above!"

Lying on my couch at an interval of ease, I form a project of some work: I trace the good effects which it ought to produce; and say to myself, *Why do we sit still till we die?* I start up, to find pen and paper: and, at the moment, my painful complaint arrests the me afresh. While I, fainting, recline again, I seem to hear—"Know, feeble worm, that even God's work must wait for God's call, and time and strength."

I am shocked to think, that throughout my louring and threatening dispensation, I still am ready to kindle and explode when the temptation comes. Mr. Henry's remark on Abimilech. who wished his armour bearer to dispatch him, lest it should be said he died by the hand of a woman, may on other accounts, be applied to me: —*Homo moritur, at superbia non moritur.*

The many mercies mixed with my pains, ought to strangle every peevish thought in its very birth. How am I surrounded with every thing that can meet and mitigate my case! What kind friends, with their sympathy and assistance!—What excellent supplies for my pulpit!—What intervals of ease!—What a Bible. full of directions and encouragements!—What opportunity for reflection and prayer!—What a prospect, after a short night of sorrow!—Complain with all these!—*Get thee hence, Satan!*

"Ah! my dear angry Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike:
Cast down, yet help afford;
Sure I will do the like.

"I will complain, yet praise;
Bewail, and yet approve:
And all my sour-sweet days.
I will lament and love."

REMAINS

OF THE

REV. RICHARD CECIL.

INTRODUCTION.

"He, that has the happy talent of parlour-preaching," says Dr. Watts,* "has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit."

On my first intercourse with Mr. Cecil, now upward of fifteen years since, when in the full vigour of his mind, I was so struck with the wisdom and originality of his remarks, that I considered it my duty to record what seemed to me most likely to be useful to others.

It should be observed that Mr. Cecil is made to speak often of himself; and, to persons who do not consider the circumstances of the case, there may appear much egotism in the quantity of such remarks here put together, and in the manner in which his things are said: but this will be treating him with the most flagrant injustice; for it must be remembered that the remarks of this nature were chiefly made by him, from time to time, in answer to my particular inquiries into his judgment and habits on certain points of doctrine or practice.

I have laboured in recording those sentiments which I have gathered from him in conversation, to preserve as much as possible his very expressions; and they who were familiar with his manner will be able to judge, in general, how far I have suc-

* *An humble attempt toward the Revival of Religion. Part I.*

ceeded: but I would expressly disavow an exact verbal responsibility. For the sentiments I make myself answerable.

In some instances I have brought together observations made at different times: the reader is not, therefore, to understand that the thoughts here collected on any subject, always followed in immediate connection.

REMARKS

MADE BY MR. CECIL,

CHIEFLY IN

CONVERSATION WITH THE EDITOR,

OR IN

DISCUSSIONS WHEN HE WAS PRESENT.

"*Multa ab eo prudenter disputata, multa etiam breviter et commodè dicta memoriæ mandabam, ficrique studebam ejus prudentiæ doctior*"....Cic. de Amicit. I.

ON THE

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND CONFLICT

The direct cause of a Christian's spiritual life, is, Union with Christ. All attention to the mere circumstantials of religion, has a tendency to draw the soul away from this union. Few men, except ministers, are called, by the nature of their station, to enter much into these circumstantials: such, for instance, as the evidences of the truth of religion. Ministers feel this deadening effect of any considerable or continued attention to externals: much more must private Christians. The head may be strengthened, till the heart is starved. Some private Christians, however, may be called on by the nature of those circles in which they move, to be qualified to meet and refute the objections which may be urged against religion. Such men, as well as ministers, while they are furnishing themselves for this purpose, must acquiesce in the work which God appoints for them, with prayer and watchfulness. If they cannot always live and abide close to the ark, and the pot of manna, and the cherubims, and the mercy-seat; yet they are drawing the water and gathering the wood necessary for the service of the camp. But let their hearts still turn toward the place where the Glory resideth.

The Christian's fellowship with God is rather a habit, than a rapture. He is a pilgrim, who has the habit of looking forward to the light before him: he has the

habit of not looking back: he has the habit of walking steadily in the way, whatever be the weather, and whatever the road. These are his habits: and the Lord of the Way is his Guide, Protector, Friend, and Felicity.

As the Christian's exigencies arise, he has a spiritual habit of turning to God, and saying, with the Church. "'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.' I have tried to find rest elsewhere. I have fled to shelters, which held out great promise of repose; but I have now long since learned to turn unto thee: 'Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noon.'"

The Christian will look back, throughout eternity, with interest and delight, on the steps and means of his conversion. "My Father told me this! My Mother told me that! Such an event was sanctified to me! In such a place God visited my soul!" These recollections will never grow dull and wearisome.

A volume might be written on the various methods which God has taken, in Providence, to lead men first to think of Him.

The history of a man's own life, is, to himself, the most interesting history in the world, next to that of the scriptures. Every man is an original and solitary character. None can either understand or feel the book of his own life like himself. The lives of other men are to him dry and vapid, when set beside his own. He enters very little into the spirit of the Old

Testament, who does not see God calling on him to turn over the pages of this history, when he says to the Jew, 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years.' He sees God teaching the Jew to look at the records of his deliverance from the Red Sea, of the manna showered down on him from heaven, and of the Amalekites put to flight before him. There are such grand events in the life and experience of every Christian. It may be well for him to review them often. I have, in some cases, vowed before God to appropriate yearly remembrances of some of the signal turns of my life. Having made the vow, I hold it as obligatory: but I would advise others to greater circumspection; as they may bring a galling yoke on themselves, which God designed not to put on them.

True grace is a growing principle. The Christian grows in DISCERNMENT: a child may play with a serpent; but the man gets as far from it as he can: a child may taste poison; but the man will not suffer a speck of poison near him. He grows in HUMILITY: the blade shoots up boldly, and the young ear keeps erect with confidence; but the full corn in the ear inclines itself toward the earth, not because it is feebler, but because it is matured. He grows in STRENGTH: the new wine ferments and frets; but the old wine acquires a body and a firmness.

Tenderness of conscience is always to be distinguished from Scrupulousness. The conscience cannot be kept too sensible and tender: but scrupulousness arises from bodily or mental infirmity, and discovers itself in a multitude of ridiculous, and superstitious, and painful feelings.

The head is dull, in discerning the value of God's expedients: and the heart cold, sluggish, and reluctant, in submitting to them: but the head is lively, in the invention of its own expedients; and the heart eager and sanguine, in the pursuit of them. No wonder, then, that God subjects both the head and the heart to a course of continual correction.

Every man will have his own criterion in forming his judgment of others. I depend very much on the effect of affliction. I consider how a man comes out of the furnace: gold will lie for a month in the furnace without losing a grain. And, while under trial, a child has a habit of turning to his father: he is not like a penitent, who has been whipped into this state: it is natural to him. It is dark, and the child has no whither to run, but to his father.

Defilement is inseparable from the world. A man can no where rest his foot on it without sinking. A strong principle of assimilation combines the world and the heart together. There are, especially, certain occasions, when the current hurries a man away, and he has lost the religious government of himself. When the pilot finds, on making the port of Messina, that the ship will not obey the helm, he knows that she is got within the influence of that attraction, which will bury her in the whirlpool. We are to avoid the danger, rather than to oppose it. This is a great doctrine of Scripture. An active force against the world is not so much inculcated, as a retreating, declining spirit. 'Keep thyself unspotted from the world.'

There are seasons when a Christian's distinguishing character is hidden from man. A Christian merchant

on 'Change is not called to show any difference in his mere exterior carriage from another merchant. He gives a reasonable answer if he is asked a question. He does not fanatically intrude religion into every sentence he utters. He does not suppose his religion to be inconsistent with the common interchange of civility. He is affable and courteous. He can ask the news of the day, and take up any public topic of conversation. But is he, therefore, not different from other men? He is like another merchant in the mere exterior circumstances, which is least in God's regard;—but, in his taste!—his views!—his science!—his hopes!—his happiness! he is as different from those around him as light is from darkness. 'He waits for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' who never passes perhaps through the thoughts of those he talks with, but to be neglected and despised!

The Christian is called to be like Abraham, in conduct; like Paul, in labours; and like John, in spirit. Though, as a man of faith, he goes forth not knowing whither, and his principle is hidden from the world, yet he will oblige the world to acknowledge: "His views, it is true, we do not understand. His principles and general conduct are a mystery to us. But a more upright, noble, generous, disinterested, peaceable, and benevolent man, we know not where to find." The world may even count him a mad-man; and false brethren may vilify his character, and calumniate his motives: yet he will bear down evil, by repaying good; and will silence his enemies, by the abundance of his labours. He may be shut out from the world—cast into prison—banished into obscurity—no eye to observe him, no hand to help him—but it is enough for him, if his Saviour will speak to him and smile on him!

Christians are too little aware what their religion requires from them, with regard to their wishes. When we wish things to be otherwise than they are, we lose sight of the great practical parts of the life of godliness. We wish, and wish—when, if we have done all that lies on us, we should fall quietly into the hands of God. Such wishing cuts the very sinews of our privileges and consolations. You are leaving me for a time; and you say you wish you could leave me better, or leave me with some assistance: but, if it is right for you to go, it is right for me to meet what lies on me, without a wish that I had less to meet, or were better able to meet it.

I could write down twenty cases, wherein I wished God had done otherwise than he did; but which I now see, had I had my own will, would have led to extensive mischief. The life of a Christian is a life of paradoxes. He must lay hold on God: he must follow hard after him: he must determine not to let him go. And yet he must learn to let God alone. Quietness before God is one of the most difficult of all Christian graces—to sit where he places us; to be what he would have us be, and this as long as He pleases. We are like a player at bowls: if he has given his bowl too little bias, he cries, "Flee:" if he has given it too much, he cries, "Rub:" you see him lifting his leg, and bending his body, in conformity to the motion he would impart to the bowl. Thus I have felt with regard to my dispensations: I would urge them or restrain them: I would assimilate them to the habit of my mind. But I have smarted for this under severe visitation. It may seem a harsh, but it is a wise and gracious dispensation toward a man, when, the instant he stretches out his hand to order his affairs, God forces him to withdraw it. Concerning what is morally good or evil, we are sufficiently in-

formed for our direction; but, concerning what is naturally good or evil, we are ignorance itself. Restlessness and self-will are opposed to our duty in these cases.

SCHOOLING THE HEART is the grand means of personal religion. To bring motives under faithful examination, is a high state of religious character: with regard to the depravity of the heart we live daily in the disbelief of our own creed. We indulge thoughts and feelings, which are founded upon the presumption that all around us are imperfect and corrupted, but that we are exempted. The self-will and ambition and passion of public characters in the religious world, all arise from this sort of practical infidelity. And, though its effects are so manifest in these men, because they are leaders of parties, and are set upon a pinnacle so that all who are without the influence of their vortex can see them; yet every man's own breast has an infallible, dogmatizing, excommunicating, and anathematizing spirit working within.

Acting from the occasion, without reflection and inquiry, is the death of personal religion. It will not suffice merely to retire to the study or the closet. The mind is sometimes, in private, most ardently pursuing its particular object; and as it then acts from the occasion, nothing is further from it than recollectedness. I have, for weeks together, in some scheme, acted so entirely from the occasion, that, when I have at length called myself to account, I have seemed like one awakened from a dream. "Am I the man who could think and speak so and so? Am I the man who could feel such a disposition, or discover such conduct?" The fascination and enchantment of the occasion is vanished; and I stand like David in similar circumstances before Nathan. Such cases in experience are, in truth, a moral intoxication: and the man is only then sober, when he begins to school his heart.

The servant of God has not only natural sensibilities, by which he feels, in common with other men, the sorrows of life; but he has moral sensibilities, which are peculiar to his character. When David was driven from his kingdom, he not only felt depressed as an exile and wanderer; but he would recollect his own sin as punished in the affliction. Eli had not only to suffer the pangs of a father in the loss of his sons; but he would recall, with bitterness of spirit, his own mismanagement, in bringing up these sons. St. Paul had not only to endure the thorn in the flesh; but he would feel that he carried about him his propensities to self-exaltation, which rendered that thorn necessary and salutary.

Dangerous predicaments are the brinks of temptation. A man often gives evidence to others that he is giddy, though he was not aware of it himself. a Whoever has been in danger himself, will guess very shrewdly concerning the dangerous state of such man.

A *haughty spirit* is a symptom of extreme danger: *A haughty spirit goeth before a fall.*

Presumptuous carelessness indicates danger. "Who fears?"—This is to be feared, that you feel no cause of fear. Such was Peter's state: *though all men forsake thee, yet will not I.*

Venturing on the borders of danger is much akin to this. A man goes on pretty well till he ventures within the atmosphere of danger; but the atmosphere of danger infatuates him. The ship is got within the influence of the vortex. and will not obey the helm. David was sitting in this atmosphere on the house-top, and was ensnared and fell.

An *accession of wealth* is a dangerous predicament for a man. At first he is stunned, if the accession be sudden: he is very humble and very grateful.

Then he begins to speak a little louder, people think him more sensible, and soon he thinks himself so.

A man is in imminent danger when, *in suspected circumstances, he is disposed to equivocate*, as Abraham did with Pharoah, and Isaac with Abimelech.

Stupidity of conscience under chastisement—an advancement to power, when a man begins to relish power—popularity—self-indulgence—a disposition to gad about, like Dinah—all these are symptoms of spiritual danger.

A CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES in our condition of life is a critical period. No man who has not passed through such a change, can form any adequate notion of its effect upon the mind. When money comes in the pocket of a poor man in small sums, it goes out as it came in, and more follows it in the same way; and, with a certain freedom and indifference, it is applied to its proper uses: but when he begins to receive round sums, that may yield him an interest, and when this interest comes to be added to his principal, and the sweets of augmentation to creep over him, it is quite a new world to him. In a rise of circumstances too the man becomes, in his own opinion, a wiser man, a greater man; and pride of station crosses him in his way. Nor is the contrary change less dangerous. Poverty has its trials. That is a fine trait in the Pilgrim's Progress, that Christian stumbled in going down the Hill in the Valley of Humiliation.

A SOUND head, a simple heart, and a spirit dependent on Christ, will suffice to conduct us in every variety of circumstances.

I CANNOT look through my past life without trembling. A variation in my circumstances has been attended

with dangers and difficulties, little of which I saw at the time compared with what reflection has since shown me, but which in the review of them make me shudder, and ought to fill me with gratitude. He, who views this subject aright, will put up particular prayers against sudden attacks.

God will have the Christian thoroughly humbled and dependent. Strong minds think perhaps sometimes, that they can effect great things in experience by keeping themselves girt up, by the recurrence of habit, by vigorous exertion. This is their unquestionable duty. But God often strips them, lest they should grow confident. He lays them bare—He makes them feel poor, dark, impotent. He seems to say, "Strive with all your vigour, but yet I am He that worketh all in all."

There is no calling or profession, however ensnaring in many respects to a Christian mind, provided it be not in itself simply unlawful, wherein God has not frequently raised up faithful witnesses, who have stood forth as examples to others, in like situations, of the practicability of uniting great eminence in the Christian Life with the discharge of the duties of their profession, however difficult.

Fear has the most steady effect on the constitutional temperament of some Christians, to keep them in their course. A strong sense of duty fixes on the minds of others, and is the prevailing principle of conduct, without any direct reference to consequences. On minds of a stubborn, refractory, and self-willed temper, fear and duty have in general little effect: they brave fear, and a mere sense of duty is a cold and lifeless princi-

ple; but GRATITUDE, under a strong and subduing sense of mercies, melts them into obedience.

THERE is a large class who would confound nature and grace. These are chiefly women. They sit at home, nursing themselves over a fire, and then trace up the natural effects of solitude and want of air and exercise into spiritual desertion. There is more pride in this than they are aware of. They are unwilling to allow so simple and natural a cause of their feelings; and wish to find something in the thing more sublime.

THERE are so many things to lower a man's topsails—he is such a dependent creature—he is to pay such court to his stomach, his food, his sleep, his exercise—that, in truth, a Hero is an idle word. Man seems formed to be a Hero in Suffering—not a Hero in Action. Men err in nothing more than in the estimate which they make of human labour. The Hero of the world is the man that makes the bustle—the man that makes the road smoke under his chaise-and-four—the man that raises a dust about him—the man that manages or devastates empires! But what is the real labour of this man—compared with that of a silent sufferer? He lives on his projects. He encounters, perhaps, rough roads—incommodious inns—bad food—storms and perils—weary days and sleepless nights:—but what are these!—his project—his point—the thing that has laid hold on his heart—glory—a name—consequence—pleasure—wealth—these render the man callous to the pains and efforts of the body! I have been in both states, and therefore understand them; and I know that men form this false estimate. Besides—there is something in bustle, and stir, and activity, that supports itself. At one period, I preach-

ed and read five times on a Sunday, and rode sixteen miles. But what did it cost me? Nothing! Yet most men would have looked on while I was rattling from village to village, with all the dogs barking at my heels, and would have called me a Hero: whereas, if they were to look at me now, they would call me an idle, lounging fellow. "He makes a Sermon on the Saturday—he gets into his study—he walks from end to end—he scribbles on a scrap of paper—he throws it away, and scribbles on another—he takes snuff—he sits down—scribbles again—walks about." The man cannot see that here is an exhaustion of the spirit, which, at night, will leave me worn to the extremity of endurance. He cannot see the numberless efforts of mind, which are crossed, and stifled, and recoil on the spirits; like the fruitless efforts of a traveller to get firm footing among the ashes on the steep sides of Mount Etna.*

Elijah appears to have been a man of what we call a great spirit: yet we never find him rising against the humiliating methods, which God was sometimes pleased to take with him; whether he is to depend for his daily food on the ravens, or is to be nourished by the slender pittance of a perishing widow. Pride would choose for us such means of provision, as have some appearance of our own agency in them: and stout-heartedness would lead us to refuse things, if we cannot have them in our own way.

The blessed man is he, who is under education in God's school; where he endures chastisement, and by chastisement is instructed. The foolish creature is bewitched, sometimes, with the enchantments and sorceries of life. He begins to lose the lively sense of

* See the Adventurer, No. cxxvii. J. P.

that something, which is superior to the glory of the world. His grovelling soul begins to say, "Is not this fine? Is not that charming? Is not that noble house worth a wish? Is not that equipage worth a sigh?" He must go to the word of God to know what a thing is worth. He must be taught there to call things by their proper names. If he have lost this habit, when his heart puts the questions he will answer them like a fool; as I have done a thousand times. He will forget that God puts his children into possession of these things, as mere stewards; and that the possession of them increases their responsibility. He will sit down, and plan and scheme to obtain possession of things, which he forgets are to be burnt and destroyed. But God dashes the fond scheme in pieces. He disappoints the project. And, with the chastisement, he sends instruction: for he knows that the silly creature, if left to himself, would begin, like the spider whose web has been swept away, to spin it again. And then the man sees that Job is blessed—not when God gives him sons, and daughters, and flocks, and herds, and power, and honour; but when God takes all these away—not, when the schemes of his carnal heart are indulged; but when they are crossed and disappointed.

A STUBBORN and rebellious mind in a Christian, must be kept low by dark and trying dispensations. The language of God, in his providence, to such an one, is generally of this kind: "I will not wholly hide myself. I will be seen by thee. But thou shalt never meet me, except in a dark night and in a storm." Ministers of such a natural spirit are often fitted for eminent usefulness by these means.

THE Christian, in his sufferings, is often tempted to

think himself forgotten. But his afflictions are the clearest proofs, that he is an object both of Satan's enmity, and of God's fatherly discipline. Satan would not have man suffer a single trouble all his life long, if he might have his way. He would give him the thing his heart is set upon. He would work in with his ambition. He would pamper his lust and his pride. But God has better things in reserve for his children: and they must be brought to desire them and seek them; and this will be through the wreck and sacrifice of all that the heart holds dear. The Christian prays for fuller manifestations of Christ's power and glory and love to him; but he is often not aware, that this is, in truth, praying to be brought into the furnace: for in the furnace only it is, that Christ can walk with his friends, and display, in their preservation and deliverance, his own almighty power. Yet, when brought thither, it is one of the worst parts of the trial, that the Christian often thinks himself, for a time, at least, abandoned. Job thought so. But while he looked on himself as an outcast, the Infinite Spirit and the Wicked Spirit were holding a dialogue on his case! He was more an object of notice and interest, than the largest armies that were ever assembled, and the mightiest revolutions that ever shook the world, considered merely in their temporal interests and consequences. Let the Christian be deeply concerned, in all his trials, to honour his Master before such observers!

Affliction has a tendency, especially if long continued, to generate a kind of despondency and ill-temper: and spiritual incapacity is closely connected with pain and sickness. The spirit of prayer does not necessarily come with affliction. If this be not poured out upon the man, he will, like a wounded beast, skulk to his den and growl there.

God has marked IMPLICITNESS AND SIMPLICITY OF FAITH with peculiar approbation. He has done this throughout the Scripture; and he is doing it daily in the Christian Life. An unsuspecting, unquestioning, unhesitating spirit he delights to honour. He does not delight in a credulous, weak, and unstable mind. He gives us full evidence, when he calls and leads; but he expects to find in us—what he himself bestows—an open ear and a disposed heart. Though he gives us not the evidence of sense: yet he gives such evidence as will be heard by an open ear, and followed by a disposed heart: *Thomas! because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they, that have not seen, and yet have believed.* We are witnesses what an open ear and a disposed heart will do in men of the world. If wealth is in pursuit—if a place presents itself before them—if their persons and families and affairs are the object—a whisper, a hint, a probability, a mere chance, is a sufficient ground of action. It is this very state of mind with regard to religion, which God delights in and honours. He seems to put forth a hand, and to say—"Put thy hand into mine. Follow all my leadings. Keep thyself attentive to every turn."

A SOUND heart is an excellent casuist. Men stand doubting what they shall do, while an evil heart is at the bottom. If, with St. Paul, they simply did *one thing*, the way would be plain. A miser, or an ambitious man, knows his points; and he has such a simplicity in the pursuit of them, that you seldom find him at a loss about the steps which he should take to attain them. He has acquired a sort of instinctive habit in his pursuit. Simplicity and rectitude would have prevented a thousand schisms in the Church; which have generally risen from men having something else in plan and prospect, and not the *one thing*.

WHAT I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter—is the unvaried language of God, in his providence. He will have CREDIT every step. He will not assign reasons, because he will exercise faith.

PRIDE urges men to inquire into the PHILOSOPHY of Divine Truth. They are not contented, for example, with the account which the Bible gives of the origin of evil, and its actual influence on mankind; but they would supply what God has left untold. They would explain the fitness and propriety of things. A mathematician may summon his scholars round his chair, and from self-evident principles deduce and demonstrate his conclusions: he has axioms; but concerning evil we have none. A Christian may say on this subject, as Sir Christopher Wren did concerning the roof of King's College Chapel—"Show me how to fix the first stone, and I will finish the building"—"Explain the origin of evil, and I will explain every other difficulty respecting evil." We are placed in a disposition and constitution of things, under a Righteous Governor. If we will not rest satisfied with this, something is wrong in our state of mind. It is a solid satisfaction to every man who has been seduced into foolish inquiries, that it is utterly impossible to advance one inch by them. He must come back to rest in God's appointment. He must come back to sit patiently, meekly, and with docility at the feet of a teacher.

DUTIES are ours: events are God's. This removes an infinite burden from the shoulders of a miserable, tempted, dying creature. On this consideration only, can he securely lay down his head and close his eyes.

The Christian often thinks, and schemes, and talks, like a practical Atheist. His eye is so conversant with Second Causes, that the Great Mover is little regarded. And yet those sentiments and that conduct of others, by which his affairs are influenced, are not formed by chance and at random. They are attracted toward the system of his affairs or repelled from them, by the Highest Power. We talk of attraction in the Universe; but there is no such thing, as we are accustomed to consider it. The natural and moral worlds are held together, in their respective operations, by an Incessant Administration. It is the mighty grasp of a controlling hand, which keeps every thing in its station. Were this control suspended, there is nothing adequate to the preservation of harmony and affection between my mind and that of my dearest friend, for a single hour.

Lord Chesterfield tells his son, that, when he entered into the world and heard the conjectures and notions about public affairs, he was suprised at their folly; because he was in the secret, and knew what was passing in the Cabinet. We negotiate. We make treaties. We make war. We cry for peace. We have public hopes and fears. We distrust one minister, and we repose on another. We recall one General or Admiral, because he has lost the national confidence, and we send out another with a full tide of hopes and expectations. We find something in men and measures, as the sufficient cause of all sufferings or anticipations.—But a religious man enters the Cabinet. He sees, in all public fears and difficulties, the pressure of God's hand. So long as this pressure continues, he knows that we may move heaven and earth in vain: every thing is bound up in icy fetters. But, when God moves his hand, the waters flow: measures avail, and hopes are accomplished.

We are too apt to forget our actual dependence on Providence, for the circumstances of every instant. The most trivial events may determine our state in the world. Turning up one street instead of another, may bring us into company with a person whom we should not otherwise have met; and this may lead to a train of other events, which may determine the happiness or misery of our lives.

Light may break in upon a man after he has taken a particular step; but he will not condemn himself for the step taken in a less degree of light: he may hereafter see still better than he now does, and have reason to alter his opinion again. It is enough to satisfy us of our duty, if we are conscious, that, at the time we take a step, we have an adequate motive. If we are conscious of a wrong motive, or of a rash proceeding, for such step we must expect to suffer.

Trouble or difficulty befalling us after any particular step, is not, of itself, an argument that the step was wrong. A storm overtook the disciples in the ship: but this was no proof that they had done wrong to go on board. Esau met Jacob, and occasioned him great fear and anxiety, when he left Laban; but this did not prove him to have done wrong in the step which he had taken. Difficulties are no ground of presumption against us, when we did not run into them in following our own will: yet the Israelites were with difficulty convinced that they were in the path of duty, when they found themselves shut in by the Red Sea. Christians, and especially ministers, must expect troubles: it is in this way that God leads them: he conducts them "*per ardua ad astra.*" They would be in imminent danger if the multitude at all times cried *Hosanna!*

We must remember that we are short-sighted creatures. We are like an unskilful chess-player, who

takes the next piece, while a skilful one looks further. He, who *sees the end from the beginning*, will often appoint us a most inexplicable way to walk in. Joseph was put into the pit and the dungeon: but this was the way which led to the throne.

We often want to know too much and too soon. We want the light of to-morrow, but it will not come till to-morrow. And then a slight turn, perhaps, will throw such light on our path, that we shall be astonished we saw not our way before. "I can wait," says Lavater. This is a high attainment. We must labour, therefore, to be quiet in that path, from which we cannot recede without danger and evil.

There is not a nobler sight in the world, than an aged and experienced Christian, who, having been sifted in the sieve of temptation, stands forth as a confirmer of the assaulted—testifying, from his own trials, the reality of religion; and meeting, by his warnings and directions and consolations, the cases of all who may be tempted to doubt it.

The Christian expects his reward, not as due to merit; but as connected, in a constitution of grace, with those acts which grace enables him to perform. The pilgrim, who has been led to the gate of heaven, will not knock there as worthy of being admitted; but the gate shall open to him, because he is brought thither. He, who *sows*, even *with tears*, the *precious seed* of faith, hope, and love, *shall doubtless come again with joy, and bring his sheaves with him;* because it is in the very nature of that seed, to yield, under the kindly influence secured to it, a joyful harvest.

ON

SUBJECTS

CONNECTED WITH

The Christian Ministry.

ON

A MINISTER'S

QUALIFYING HIMSELF FOR HIS OFFICE.

When a young Minister sets out, he should sit down and ask himself HOW HE MAY BEST QUALIFY HIMSELF FOR HIS OFFICE.

How does a physician qualify himself? It is not enough that he offers to feel the pulse. He must read and inquire, and observe, and make experiments, and correct himself again and again. He must lay in a stock of medical knowledge before he begins to feel the pulse.

The Minister is a Physician of a far higher order. He has a vast field before him. He has to study an infinite variety of constitutions. He is to furnish himself with the knowledge of the whole system of remedies. He is to be a man of skill and expedient. If one thing fail he must know how to apply another. Many intricate and perplexed cases will come before him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared for such. His patients will put many questions to him: it will be disgraceful to him not to be prepared to answer them. He is a merchant embarking in extensive concerns. A little ready money in the pocket will not answer the demands that will be made upon him. Some of us seem to think it will, but they are grossly deceived. There must be a well furnished account at the banker's.

But it is not all gold that glitters. A young Minister must learn to separate and select his materials.

A man who talks to himself will find out what suits the heart of man: some things respond: they ring again. Nothing of this nature is lost on mankind: it is worth its weight in gold, for the service of a Minister. He must remark, too, what it is that puzzles and distracts the mind: all this is to be avoided: it may wear the garb of deep research, and great acumen, and extensive learning; but it is nothing to the mass of mankind.

One of the most important considerations in making a sermon, is to disembarrass it as much as possible. The sermons of the last century were like their large, unwieldy chairs. Men have now a far more true idea of a chair. They consider it as a piece of furniture to sit upon, and they cut away from it every thing that embarrasses and encumbers it. It requires as much reflection and wisdom to know what is not to be put into a sermon, as what is.

A young Minister should likewise look round him, that he may see what has succeeded and what has not. Truth is to be his companion, but he is to clothe her so as to gain her access. Truth must never bow to fashion or prejudice; but her garb may be varied. No man was ever eminently successful in his ministry, who did not make Truth his friend. Such a man might not see her, indeed, in all her beauty and proportions; but, certainly, he saw and loved her. A young Minister should remember that she does not wear the dress of a party. Wherever she is, she is one and the same, however variously men may array her. He, who is ignorant of her prominent and distinguishing features, is like a musician who plays half score: it grates on every well-formed ear; as fatal error finds no corresponding vibration in the renewed heart. Truth forms an immediate acquaintance with such a heart, by a certain fitness and suitableness to its state and feelings. She is something different from the picture which a Church-

man draws of her. A Dissenter misses her perfect figure. A Frenchman distorts her features in one way, and an Englishman in another. Every one makes his own cast and colour too essential to her.

Knowledge, then, and Truth, are to be the constant aim of a young Minister. But where shall we find them? Let him learn from a fool, if a fool can teach him any thing. Let him be every where and always a learner. He should imitate Gainsborough. Gainsborough transfused Nature into his landscapes, beyond almost any of his contemporaries; because Gainsborough was every where the painter. Every remarkable feature or position of a tree—every fine stroke of Nature—was copied into his pocket-book on the spot; and, in his next picture, appeared with a life and vivacity and nature, which no strength of memory or imagination could have supplied.

There is a certain wise way, too, in which he should accustom himself to look down on the pursuits of all other men. No man of eminence in his profession is destitute of such a partial feeling for his profession: though his judgment may remonstrate with him thereon, as an unfounded partiality. The Minister, however, is REQUIRED so to view all other pursuits. He alone is the man, whose aim is Eternity. He alone is the man whose office and profession, in all their parts, are raised into dignity and importance by their direct reference to Eternity. For Eternity he schemes, and plans, and labours.

He should become a philosopher also. He should make experiments on himself and others, in order to find out what will produce effect. He is a fisherman: and the fisherman must fit himself to his employment. If some fish will bite only by day, he must fish by day: if others will bite only by moon-light, he must fish for them by moon-light. He has an engine to work, and it must be his most assiduous endeavour to work his engine to the full extent of its powers: and, to

find out its powers, is the first step toward success and effect. Many men play admirably on the organ, if you would allow to them that there is no difference between an organ and a harpsichord, but they have utterly mistaken its powers. Combination is the unrivalled excellence of the organ; and therefore he only can display its powers, who studies the chords and stops in all their infinite variety of resolution and composition, rather than the rapid motion of his fingers only.

But all the Minister's efforts will be vanity, or worse than vanity, if he have not Unction. Unction must come down from heaven, and spread a savour and relish and feeling over his ministry. And, among all the other means of qualifying himself for his office, the Bible must hold the first place, and the last also must be given to *the word of God and prayer*.

ON THE

ASSISTANCE

WHICH A MINISTER HAS REASON TO EXPECT

IN THE

DISCHARGE OF HIS PUBLIC DUTY.

Men have carried their views on this subject to extremes. Enthusiasts have said that learning, and that studying and writing sermons, have injured the Church. The accurate men have said, "Go and hear one of these enthusiasts hold forth!"

But both classes may be rendered useful. Let each correct its evils, yet do its work in its own way.

Some men set up exorbitant notions about accuracy. But exquisite accuracy is totally lost on mankind. The greater part of those who hear, cannot be brought to see the points of the accurate man. The Scriptures are not written in this manner. I should advise a young Minister to break through all such cobwebs, as these unphilosophical men would spin round him. An humble and modest man is silenced, if he sees one of these critics before him. He should say, "I am God's servant. To my own Master I stand or fall. I will labour according to the utmost ability which God giveth, and leave all consequences to him."

We are especially taught in the New Testament to glorify the Spirit of God: and, in his gracious operations in our ministry, we are nearer the Apostolic Times than we often think ourselves.

But this assistance is to be expected by us, as labourers in the vineyard; not as rhapsodists. Idle

men may be pointed out, who have abused the doctrine of divine assistance; but what has not been abused? We must expect a special blessing to accompany the truth: not to supersede labour, but to rest on and accompany labour.

A Minister is to be *in season, and out of season;* and, therefore, every where a Minister. He will not employ himself in writing secular histories: he will not busy himself in prosecuting mathematical inquiries. He will labour directly in his high calling; and indirectly, in a vast variety of ways, as he may be enabled: and God may bless that word in private, which may have been long heard in public in vain.

A Minister should satisfy himself in saying, "It matters not what men think of my talents. Am I doing what I can?" for there is great encouragement in that commendation of our Lord's, *She hath done what she could.* It would betray a wrong state of mind to say, "If I had discharged my duty in such and such a way, I should have succeeded." This is a carnal spirit. If God bless the simple manner in which you spoke, that will do good; if not, no manner of speaking could have done it.

There is such a thing in the religious world as a cold, carnal wisdom: every thing must be nicely weighed in the scales: every thing must be exactly measured by the rule. I question if this is not worse, in its consequences, than the enthusiasm which it opposes. Both are evil, and to be shunned. But I scarcely ever knew a preacher or writer of this class who did much good.

We are to go forth, expecting *the excellency of God's power* to accompany us, since we are but *earthen vessels:* and if, in the Apostolic days, diligence was necessary, how much more requisite is it now!

But, to the exercise of this diligence, a sufficiency in all things is promised. What does a Minister require? In all these respects the promise is applicable

to him. He needs, for instance, courage and patience: he may, therefore, expect that the Holy Spirit will enable him for the exercise of these graces.

A minister may expect more superintendence, more elevation, than a hearer. It can scarcely be questioned that he ought to pray for this: if so, he has a ground in Scripture thus to pray.

I have been cured of expecting the Holy Spirit's influence without due preparation on our part, by observing how men preach who take up that error. I have heard such men talk nonsense by the hour.

We must combine Luther with St. Paul—"*Benè orasse est benè studuisse*" must be united with St. Paul's *Meditate upon these things: give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.* One errs who says, "I will preach a reputable sermon:" and another errs who says, "I will leave all to the assistance of the Holy Spirit." while he has neglected a diligent preparation.

ON

PREACHING CHRIST.

"We preach Christ crucified." 1 Cor. i, 23.

Christ is God's great ordinance. Nothing ever has been done, nor will be done to purpose, but so far as He is held forth with simplicity. All the lines must centre in Him. I feel this in my own experience, and therefore I govern my Ministry by it: but then this is to be done *according to the Analogy of Faith*—not ignorantly, absurdly, and falsely. I doubt not, indeed, but that excess on this side is less pernicious than excess on the other: because God will bless His own especial Ordinance, though partially understood and partially exhibited.

There are many weighty reasons for rendering Christ prominent in our Ministry:—

1. *Christ cheers the prospect.* Every thing connected with Him has light and gladness thrown round it. I look out of my window: the scene is scowling—dark—frigid—forbidding: I shudder: my heart is chilled. But, let the Sun break forth from the cloud—I can feel—I can act—I can spring.

2. *God descending and dwelling with man, is a truth so infinitely grand, that it must absorb all others.* "You are his attendants! Well! But the king! There he is!—the king!"

3. *Out of Christ God is not intelligible, much less amiable.* Such men as Clarke and Abernethy talk sub-

lime nonsense. A sick woman said to me—'Sir! I have no notion of God. I can form no notion of Him. You talk to me about Him, but I cannot get a single idea that seems to contain any thing'—But you know how to conceive of Jesus Christ as a man! God comes down to you in Him, full of kindness and condescension. 'Ah! Sir, that gives me something to lay hold on. *There* I can rest. I understand God in His Son.' But if God is not *intelligible* out of Christ much less is He *amiable*, though I ought to feel Him so. He is an object of horror and aversion to me, corrupted as I am! I fear—I tremble—I resist—I hate—I rebel.

4. *A preacher may pursue his Topic, without being led by it to Christ.* A man who is accustomed to investigate topics is in danger. He takes up his topic, and pursues it. He takes up another, and pursues it. At length Jesus Christ becomes his topic, and then he pursues that. If he cannot so feel and think as to bend all subjects naturally and gracefully to Christ, he must seek his remedy in selecting such as are more evangelical.

5. *God puts peculiar honour on the preaching of Christ crucified.* A philosopher may philosophise his hearers, but the preaching of Christ must convert them. John the Baptist will make his hearers tremble; but, if *the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*, let him exhibit that peculiar feature of his superiority—Jesus Christ. Men may preach Christ ignorantly—blunderingly—absurdly: yet God will give it efficacy, because he is determined to magnify his own ordinance.

6. *God seems in the doctrine of the Cross, to design the destruction of man's pride.* Even the murderer and the adulterer sometimes become subjects of the grace of the Gospel, because the murderer and adulterer are more easily convinced and humbled: but the man of virtue is seldom reached, because the man of virtue disdains to descend. *Remember me*, saved a

dying malefactor!—*God, I thank Thee*, condemned a proud Pharisee!

Every Minister should therefore inquire, "What is for me the wisest way of preaching Christ to men?" Some seem to think that in the choice of a wise way, there lurks always a trimming disposition. There are men, doubtless, who will sacrifice to Self, even *Christ Jesus the Lord*: but they, of all men, are farthest from the thing. There is a secret in doing it, which none but an honest man can discover. The knave is not half wise enough.

We are not to judge one another in these things. Sufficient it is to us, to know what we have to do. There are different ways of doing the same thing, and that with success and acceptance. We see this in the Apostles themselves. They not only preached Christ in different ways; but, what is more, they could not do this like one another. They declare this fact themselves; and acknowledge the grace of God in their respective gifts. *Our beloved brother Paul, writes*, says St. Peter, *according to the wisdom given unto him*. But there are Peters, in our days, who would say—"Paul is too learned. Away with these things, which are *hard to be understood*. He should be more simple. I dislike all this reasoning." And there are Pauls, who would say, "Peter is rash and unguarded. He should put a curb on his impetuosity." And there are Johns, who would say, "They should both discharge their office in my soft and winning manner. No good will come of this fire and noise." Nothing of this sort! *Each hath his proper gift of God; one after this manner, and another after that*: and each seems only desirous *to occupy faithfully till his Master come*, leaving his brethren to *stand or fall to their own Master*.

Too much dependence is often placed on a system of rational contrivance. An ingenious man thinks

he can so manage to preach Christ, that his hearers will say—"Here is nothing of Methodism! This has nothing to do with that system!" I will venture to say, if this is the sentiment communicated by his ministry, that he has not delivered his message. The people do not know what he means, or he has kept back part of God's truth. He has fallen on a carnal contrivance, to avoid a cross; and he does no good to souls. The WHOLE MESSAGE MUST be delivered; and it is better it should be delivered even coarsely, than not at all. We may lay it down as a principle—That if the Gospel be a MEDICINE, and a SPECIFIC too—as it is—it must be got down SUCH AS IT IS. Any attempt to sophisticate and adulterate will deprive it of its efficacy; and will often recoil on the man who makes the attempt, to his shame and confusion. The Jesuits tried to render Christianity palatable to the Chinese by adulterating it, but the Jesuits were driven with abhorrence from the empire.

If we have to deal with men of learning, let us show learning so far as to demonstrate that it bears its testimony to the Truth. But accommodation in manner must often spring from humility. We must condescend to the capacities of men, and make the truth intelligible to them.

If this be our manner of preaching Christ, we must make up our minds not to regard the little caviller, who will judge us by the standard of his favourite author or preacher. We must be cautious, too, since men of God have been and ever will be the butt and scorn of the world, of thinking that we can escape its sneers and censures. It is a foolish project—To AVOID GIVING OFFENCE; but it is our duty, To avoid giving UNNECESSARY offence. It is necessary offence, if it is given by the Truth; but it is unnecessary, if our own spirit occasion it.

I have often thought that St. Paul was raised up peculiarly to be an example to others, in labouring to

discover the wisest way of exhibiting the Gospel: not only that he was to be a great pattern in other points, but designedly raised up for this very thing. How does he labour to make the truth REASONABLY PLAIN! How does he strain every nerve and ransack every corner of the heart to make it REASONABLY PALATABLE! We need not be instructed in his particular meaning when he says, *I became all things to all men, if by any means I might save some.* His history is a comment on the declaration.

The knowledge of Jesus Christ is a wonderful mystery. Some men think they preach Christ gloriously, because they name him every two minutes in their Sermons. But that is not preaching Christ. To understand, and enter into, and open his various offices and characters—the glories of his person and work—his relation to us, and ours to Him, and to God the Father and God the Spirit through him—this is the knowledge of Christ. The Divines of the present day are stunted dwarfs in this knowledge, compared with the great men of the last age. To know Jesus Christ for ourselves, is to make him a CONSOLATION, —DELIGHT,—STRENGTH,—RIGHTEOUSNESS,—COMPANION,—and END.

This is the aspect in which religion should be presented to mankind: it is suited, above all other, to produce effect; and Effect is our object. We must take human nature, as we find human nature. We must take human nature in great cities, as we find human nature in great cities. We may say—"THIS or THAT is the aspect which OUGHT to have most effect: we must illuminate the mind: we must enlist the reason: we must attack the conscience." We may do all this, and yet our comparative want of success in begetting and educating the Sons of Glory, may demonstrate to us that there is some more Effective way; and that sound sense and philosophy call on us to adopt that way, BECAUSE it is most Effective.

Our system of preaching must meet mankind: they must find it POSSIBLE to live in the bustle of the world, and yet serve God: after being worried and harassed with its concerns, let them hear cheering truths concerning Christ's Love and Care and Pity, which will operate like an enchantment in dispelling the cares of life and calming the anxious perturbations of conscience. Bring forward privileges and enforce duties, in their proper places and proportions.

Let there be no extremes: yet I am arrived at this conviction: Men, who lean toward the extreme of evangelical PRIVILEGES in their ministry, do much more to the conversion of their hearers; than they do, who lean toward the extreme of REQUIREMENT. And my own EXPERIENCE confirms my Observation. I feel myself repelled, if any thing chills, loads, or urges me. This is my nature, and I see it to be very much the nature of other men. But, let me hear, *Son of man, thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord*—I am melted and subdued.

ON

A MINISTER'S

FAMILIAR INTERCOURSE WITH HIS HEARERS.

What passes, on these occasions, too often savours of this world. We become one among our hearers. They come to Church on Sunday; and we preach: the week comes round again, and its nonsense with it. Now if a Minister were what he should be, the people would feel it. They would not attempt to introduce this dawdling, silly, diurnal chat! When we countenance this, it looks as though, "On the Sunday I am ready to do MY business; and, in the week, you may do YOURS." This lowers the tone of what I say on the Sabbath. It forms a sad comment on my preaching.

I have traced, I think, some of the evil that lies at the root of this. We are more concerned to be thought Gentlemen, than to be felt as Ministers. Now being desirous to be thought a man who has kept good company, strikes at the root of that rough work—the bringing of God into his world. It is hard and rough work to bring God into his own world. To talk of a Creator, and Preserver, and Redeemer, is an outrage on the feelings of most companies.

There is important truth in what Mr. Wesley said to his preachers, when rightly understood, however it may have been ridiculed: "You have no more to do with being Gentlemen, than Dancing Masters." The character of a Minister is far beyond that of a mere Gentleman. It takes a higher walk. He will, indeed, study to be a real gentleman: he will be the farthest possible from a rude man: he will not disdain to learn

nor to practice the decencies of society: but he will sustain a still higher character.

It is a snare to a Minister when in company, to be drawn out to converse largely on the state of the Funds, and on the News of the day. He should know the world, and what is doing in the world, and should give things of this nature their due place and proportion; but if he can be drawn out to give twenty opinions on this or that subject of politics or literature, he is lowered in his tone. A man of sense feels something violent in the transition from SUCH conversation to the Bible and to Prayer.

Dinner Visits can seldom be rendered really profitable to the mind. The company are so much occupied, that little good is to be done. A Minister should show his sense of the value of time: it is a sad thing when those around him begin to yawn. He must be a man of business. It is not sufficiently considered how great the sin of idleness is. We talk in the pulpit of the value of time, but we act too little on what we say.

Let a Minister who declines associating much with his hearers, satisfy himself that he has a good reason for doing so. If reproached for not visiting them so much as they wish, let him have a just reason to assign. A man who is at work for his family, may have as much love for them as the wife, though she is always with them.

I fell into a mistake, when a young man, in thinking that I could talk with men of the world on their own ground, and could thus win them over to mine. I was fond of painting, and so talked with them on that subject. This pleased them: but I did not consider that I gave a consequence to their pursuits which does not belong to them; whereas I ought to have endeavoured to raise them above these, that they might engage in higher. I did not see this at the time: but I now see it to have been a great error. A wealthy man builds

a fine house, and opens to himself fine prospects: he wants you to see them, for he is sick of them himself. They thus draw you into their schemes. A man has got ten thousand pounds: you congratulate him on it, and that without any intimation of his danger or his responsibility. Now you may tell him in the pulpit that riches are nothing worth; but you will tell him this in vain, while you tell him out of it that they are.

Lord Chesterfield says a man's character is degraded when HE IS TO BE HAD. A Minister ought never TO BE HAD.

ON

A MINISTER'S

ENCOURAGING

ANIMADVERSION ON HIMSELF.

It is a serious inquiry for a Minister HOW FAR HE SHOULD ENCOURAGE ANIMADVERSION ON HIMSELF IN HIS HEARERS. He will encounter many ignorant and many censorious remarks, but he may gain much on the whole.

He should lay down to himself a few principles.

It is *better that a Minister smart than mistake.* It is better that a traveller meet a surly, impertinent fellow to direct him in his way, than lose his way. A Minister is so important in his office, that, whatever others think of it, he should regard this and this only as the transaction for eternity. But a man may be labouring in the fire: he may be turning the world upside down, and yet be wrong. You say he must read his Bible. True! but he must use ALL means. He must build his usefulness on this principle—*if by* ANY *means.* If the wheel hitches, let him, by ANY means, discover where it hitches. This principle is to be worked continually in his mind. He must labour to keep it up to a fine, keen edge. Let him never believe that his view of himself is sufficient. A merchant, sailing in quest of gain, is so intent on his object that he will take a hint from any man. If we had all the meaning to which we pretend in our pursuits, we should feel and act like him.

A minister must lay it down also as a principle, that *he will never sufficiently understand his own pride and*

self-love ; and that confidence in his own sense, which cleaves closely to every man. He must consider this as the general malady. Man is blind and obstinate—poor and proud. This silly creature, through ignorance of this principle, will not only not hear a vulgar hearer, who animadverts on him ; but he will scarcely listen to a superior man among his hearers. He attends to such a one, because it would be indecent not to attend. But he finds some excuse for himself in his own bosom. He reverences what is said very little, if at all. He strokes and flatters himself, and makes up the affair very well in his own mind.

A Minister should consider *how much more easily a weak man can read a wise man, than a wise man can read himself :* and that for this reason—no man can see and hear himself. He is too much formed in his own habits—his family notions—his closet notions—to detect himself. He, who stands by and sees a game played, has vast advantages over the players. Besides, preachers err systematically—learnedly—scientifically. The simple hearer has an appeal to nature in his heart. He can often feel that his Minister is wrong, when he is not able to set him right. Dr. Manton, no doubt, thought he had preached well, and as became him, before the Lord Mayor; but he felt himself reproved and instructed, when a poor man pulled him by the sleeve, and told him he had understood nothing of his sermon : there was an appeal in this poor man's breast to nature : nature could not make any thing of the Doctor's learning. When Apelles took his stand behind his picture, he was a wise man : and he was a wise man too, when he altered the shoe on the hint of the cobler : the cobler, in his place, was to be heard.

A minister should consider, too, that *few will venture to speak to a public man.* It is a rare thing to hear a man say—" Upon my word that thing, or your general manner, is defective or improper." If a wise man says this, he shows a regard, which the united stock of

five hundred flatterers will not equal. I would set down half the blunders of Ministers to their not listening to animadversion. I have heard it said—for the men, who would animadvert on us, talk among themselves, if we refuse to let them talk to us——I have heard it said, "Why don't you talk to him?"—"Why don't I talk to him! because he will not hear!"

Let him consider, moreover, that *this aversion from reproof is not wise.* This is a symptom of the disease. Why should he want this hushing up of the disorder? This is a mark of a little mind. A great man can afford to lose: a little insignificant fellow is afraid of being snuffed out.

A Minister mistakes who should refuse to read any anonymous letter. He may, perhaps, see nothing in them the first time; but, let him read them again and again. The writer raises his superstructure, probably, on a slight basis; yet there is generally some sort of occasion. If he points out but a small error, yet THAT is worth detecting.

In the present habits of men, it is so difficult to get them to tell the naked truth, that a Minister should show a disposition to be corrected: he should show himself to be sensible of the want of it. He is not to encourage idle people: that could be productive of no possible good.

These are some of the reasons for a Minister's encouragement, in a judicious manner, of animadversion on himself in his hearers.

Sometimes, however, a man will come who appears to be an impertinent man, independently of what he has to remark—a man who is evidently disposed to be troublesome. Such a man came to me, with—"Sir, you said such a thing that seemed to lean to the doctrine of universal redemption. Pray, Sir, may I speak a little with you on that subject?" The manner of the man at once marked his character. He seemed to bring with him this kind of sentiment—"I'll go and

set that man right. I'll call that man to account." It was a sort of democratic insolence of mind. Instead of answering him as he expected, I treated him as a child. I turned it into an occasion of preaching a sermon to him :—" Sir, do you come to instruct me, or to be instructed? Before we enter on a question which has exercised the greatest men, we want a preparedness of mind : want a deep humility—a teachableness —a spirit of dependence—of which you seem to me to have but little."

On the other hand, a man may come, quite as ignorant as the other, yet a simple character. I have distressed him. Though he cannot, perhaps, be made to understand what he inquires about—yet a Minister should say to himself, " Have I puzzled him? He is wounded, and he comes for help."

A minister should remember that he is not always to act and speak authoritatively. He sits on his friend's chair, and his friend says his things to him with frankness. They may want, perhaps, a little decorum ; but he should receive them in the most friendly and good-humoured way in the world. A thing strikes this man and that man : he may depend on it, that it has some foundation.

But there are persons, whom a Minister should more than encourage to animadvert on him. He should employ them. He should explain himself to them. He does not merely want an account of his sermon, but he employs them on business. To such sensible persons, he will say—" What serious judgment do you form of my preaching? Do tell me what sort of man I am."

A Minister has to treat with another sort of hearers—uncandid men, and yet men of capacity : a sort of men, who are not now pleased, and then displeased. They spy a blot every where. He is likely to make a mistake with regard to such men :—" What signifies the opinion of that man? That man can never be pleased." True! that man cannot be pleased, but it

does not follow that he tells you no truth. In treating with such a man, he should say—"His edge may be too keen, for candour and sound judgment; yet, if it lays open to me what I could not otherwise see, let me improve by its keenness. What hurt can he do me? He may damp or irritate others, by talking thus to them; but, let me learn what is to be learnt from him." Such a man lifts a Minister from his standing, where he settles down too easily and firmly. If I know a man to be of this class, I will distinguish: "This is the man: but that is myself!" If I would write a book to stand the fire, let me find out the severest censor. My friend is but half the man: there is a consentaneousness of sentiment between us: we have fallen in together, till we scarcely know how to differ from each other. Let the man come who says —"Here I can discover you to yourself; and there!" The best hints perhaps are obtained from snarling people. Medicaments make the patient smart, but they heal.

Yet a Minister must not take this in the gross. He is not to invite rude men round his door. If he suffer his hearers to treat him irreverently—if he allow them to dispute with him on every occasion—he will bring ruin on the Church. *The Priest's lips must keep knowledge.* If a parent allow his children to question every thing, so that nothing is to be settled without a hundred proofs, they will soon despise their teacher, for they will think themselves able to teach him. The Minister must have decided superiority and authority, or he will want one of the principal qualities of his ministry. This is not inconsistent with receiving hints. He may mistake in some things: but he should mark the complexion of his congregation in deciding how far they are to be heard on his mistakes. If the people are heady, forward, confident in their own sense, they are never to be encouraged. They are gone too far.

ON

THE LIMITS

WHICH A MINISTER SHOULD PUT TO THE INDULGENCE OF HIS CURIOSITY,

WITH REGARD TO

PUBLIC EXHIBITIONS.

An extreme is to be avoided. Some persons would condemn even rational curiosity. But *the works of the Lord are great: sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* I would not object, therefore, to visit the museum; or to go to see the rare natural productions often exhibited. I would enlarge, too, my views of man and the world, by frequenting the Panoramas of Cities. And, though I would not run after every sight, yet I would use my liberty in selecting.

But some are in an opposite extreme. They are found every where. But he, who sustains the character of *a scribe of the kingdom of heaven*, ought not to be found every where. The man, who is *seeking a heavenly country*, will show the spirit of one whose *conversation* is there.

There is something in religion, when rightly apprehended, that is masculine and grand. It removes those little desires, which are "the constant hectic of a fool."

Every thing of the drama, and whatever is so distinctly *the course of this world*, must be shunned. If a Minister take one step into the world, his hearers will take two. Much may be learnt from the sentiments of men of the world. If a man of this cha-

racter who heard me preach, should meet me he would say, "Why I did not expect to see you here!" —then he ought not to have seen me there.

There must be measure and proportion in our attention to Arts and Sciences. These were the very idols of the heathen world: and what are THEY, who now follow them with an idolatrous eagerness, but like children, who are charmed with the sparkling of a rocket, and yet see nothing in the sun?

Yet I would not indulge a cynical temper. If I go through a gentleman's Gallery of Pictures, I would say, "This is an admirable Claude!"—but I would take occasion to drop a hint of something higher, and better, and to make it felt that I fell in with these things rather incidently than purposely. But all this must be done with tenderness and humility: "I tread on the pride of Plato," said Diogenes, as he walked over Plato's carpet: "Yes—and with more pride," said Plato.

"THEY pass best over the world," said Queen Elizabeth, "who trip over it quickly; for it is but a bog. If we stop, we sink."

I would not make it my criterion—"Christ would not come hither! I must take a lower standard in these things. I am a poor creature and must be contented to learn in many places and by many scenes, which Christ need not to have frequented.

ON THE MEANS OF

PROMOTING A SPIRIT OF DEVOTION

IN CONGREGATIONS.

Let us ask, "What is man?" He is a creature of feeling, as well as of intellect. We must interest him as we can. It is unphilosophical to depend on the mere statement of truth. No doubt there is a contrary error: for what is the end of exciting attention, if there is nothing deserving attention?

It is of the first importance, to PUT MEANING into every part of the service. In either extreme, of appealing to the understanding or the feelings, there may be no meaning: in a dull and lifeless preacher, there is no meaning; and, in one of a contrary character, there may be nothing worthy of the name.

There is, besides, TOO LITTLE ATTENTION, in many Churches, TO MAN AS MAN. I would consult his convenience in all lawful points. If he could sit easier on cushions, he should have cushions. I would not tell him to be warm in God's service, while I leave him to shiver with cold. No door should creak: no window should rattle.

Music has an important effect on devotion. Wherever fantastical music enters, it betrays a corrupt principle. A congregation cannot enter into it; or, if it does, it cannot be a Christian congregation. Wherever there is an attempt to set off the music in the service, and the attempt is apparent, it is the first step towards carnality. Though there is too little life in the style of music adopted among the Moravians, yet the simplicity of Christianity pervades their devotion.

ORDER is important. Some persons, by coming in when they please, propagate a loose habit of mind. For man is a sympathetic creature; and what he sees others neglect, he is in danger of growing negligent in himself. If the reader goes through the Service as though the great business for which they are assembled is not yet begun, the people will soon feel thus themselves.

The Minister should take occasion frequently to impress on the people the IMPORTANCE OF THE WORK in which they are engaged. It is not enough to take it for granted that they feel this. We must take nothing for granted. Man needs to be reminded of every thing, for he soon forgets every thing.

MONOTONY must be, above all things, avoided. The mind is vagrant: monotony cannot recall it. There may be continued vehemence, while the attention is not excited: it is disturbance and noise: there is nothing to lead the mind into a useful train of thought or feeling.

There is an opposite error to vehemence. Men of sense and literature depress devotion by treating things ABSTRACTEDLY. Simplicity, with good sense, is of unspeakable value. Religion must not be rendered abstract and curious. If a curious remark presents itself, reserve it for another place. The hearer gets away from the bustle and business of the week: he comes trembling under his fears: he would mount upward in his spirit: but a curious, etymological disquisition chills and repels him.

In truth, we should be men of business in our congregations. We should endeavour both to excite and instruct our hearers. We should render the service an interesting affair in all its parts. We should rouse men: we should *bind up the broken-hearted:* we should *comfort the feeble-minded:* we should *support the weak:* we should *become all things to all men, if by any means we may save some.*

ON THE

MARRIAGE

OF

CHRISTIAN MINISTERS

It seems to me, that many men do not give sufficient weight to our Lord's observations upon those *who made themselves Eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake*, nor to St. Paul's reasoning on the subject of marraige. I would only imply, that both our Lord and the Apostle seem to establish it as a principle, that a single state, when it can be chosen and is chosen for the sake of the Gospel, is the superior state. This, I fear, is too much forgotten; and those men, who might have *received the saying*, and have done more service to the Church of God by receiving it, have given it little or no weight in their deliberations.

And yet it ought to be considered, that the very character which would best fit men for living in a single state, would abstract them too much from the feelings and wants of their people. I am fully sensible that I should have been hardened against the distresses of my hearers, if I had not been reduced from my natural stoicism by domestic sufferings.

The cases, I allow, are extremely few, in which a man may do, on the whole, more service to the Church by imitating St. Paul than by marrying: yet there are such cases; and it behoves every Minister seriously to consider himself and his situation, before he determines on marriage. He should not regard this state as indispensably necessary to him, but should

always remember, that *cæteris paribus*, he, who remains single, is most worthy of honour.

But, when it is proper that a Minister should marry, and he has determined to do it, how few select such women as suit their high and holy character! A Minister is like a man who has undertaken to traverse the world. He has not only fair and pleasant ground to travel over, but he must encounter deserts and marshes and mountains. The traveller wants a firm and steady stay. His wife should be, above all things, a woman of faith and prayer—a woman, too, of a sound mind and of a tender heart—and one who will account it her glory to lay herself out in co-operating with her husband, by meeting his wants and soothing his cares. She should be his unfailing resource, so far as he ought to seek this in the creature. Blessed is she, who is thus qualified and thus lives!

But, after all, the married Minister, if he would live devotedly, must move in a determined sphere. Whatever his wife may be, yet she is a woman—and if things are to go on well they must have two separate worlds. There may, indeed, be cases, when a man, with something of a soft and feminine cast about his mind, may be united to a woman of a mind so superior and cultivated, that he may choose to make it his plan that they shall move in the same world. In such rare cases it may be done with less inconvenience than in any other. But, even here, the highest end is sacrificed to feeling. Every man, whatever be his natural disposition, who would urge his powers to the highest end, must be a man of solitary studies. Some uxorious men of considerable minds have moved so much in the women's world, that reflection, disquisition, and the energies of thought have been ruined by the habit of indulging the lighter, softer, and more playful qualities. Such a man is, indeed, the idol of the female world:

but he would rather deserve to be so, if he stood upon his own ground while he attempted to meet their wants, instead of descending to mingle among them.

God has put a difference between the sexes. but education and manners have put a still greater. They are designed to move in separate spheres. but occasionally to unite together in order to soften and relieve each other. To attempt any subversion of God's design herein is being wiser than He who made us; and who has so established this affair, that each sex has its separate and appropriate excellence—only to be attained by pursuing it in the order of nature. Thought is or ought to be the characterizing feature of man, and Feeling that of the woman.

Every man and woman in the world has an appropriate mind; and that, in proportion to their strength of thought and feeling. Each has a way of their own—a habit—a system—a world—separated and solitary, in which no person on earth can have communion with them. Job says of God, *He knoweth the way that I take*; and, when the Christian finds a want of competency in his bosom friend to understand and meet his way, he turns with an especial nearness and familiarity of confidence to God, who knoweth it in all its connections and associations, its peculiarities and its imperfections.

I may be thought to speak harshly of the female character; but, whatever persuasion I have of its intended distinction from that of man, I esteem a woman, who aims only to be what God designed her to be, as honourable as any man on earth. She stands not in the same order of excellence, but she is equally honourable.

But women have made themselves, and weak men have contributed to make them, what God never

designed them to be. Let any thinking man survey the female character as it now stands—often nervous, debilitated, and imaginative, and this superinduced chiefly by education and manners—and he will find it impossible that any great vigour of mind can be preserved or any high intellectual pursuits cultivated, so far as this character stands in his way.

"DOING AS OTHERS DO," is the prevalent principle of the present female character, to whatever absurd, preposterous, masculine, or even wicked lengths it may lead. This is, so far as it avails with man or woman, the ruin, death, and grave of all that is noble, and virtuous, and praise-worthy.

A studious man, whose time is chiefly spent at home, and especially a Minister, ought not to have to meet the IMAGINARY wants of his wife. The disorders of an imaginative mind are beyond calculation. He is not worthy the name of a husband, who will not, with delight, nurse his wife, with all possible tenderness and love, through a real visitation however long; but he is ruined, if he falls upon a woman of a sickly fancy. It is scarcely to be calculated what an influence the spirit of his wife will have on his own, and on all his ministerial affairs. If she comes not up to the full standard, she will so far impede him, derange him, unsanctify him.

If there is such a thing as GOOD in this world, it is in the ministerial office. The affairs of this employment are the greatest in the world. In prosecuting these with a right spirit, the Minister keeps in motion a vast machine; and, such are the incalculable consequences of his wife's character to him, that, if she assit him not in urging forward the machine, she will hang as a dead weight upon its wheels.

A woman may have a high taste: her natural temper may be peevish and fretful: she may have a delicate and fastidious mind: she may long for every thing she sees. It is not enough that she is, in reality,

a pious woman. Her taste, her mind, her manners, must have a decorum and congruity to her husband's office and situation. She must bear to be crossed in her wishes for unsuitable objects: he will say, with firmness, "This shall not be. It is not enough, that it would gratify you: it is wrong. It is not enough, that it is not flagrantly sinful: it is improper, unsuitable to our character and station.* It is not enough that money will buy it, and I have got money: it would be a culpable use of our talent. It is not enough that your friend possesses such a thing: we stand and fall to our own Master."

* *Nec, tibi quid liceat, sed quid fecisse decebit.*
Occurrat.....Claudian. J. P.

ON

VISITING DEATH-BEDS.

I HAVE found it, in many cases, a difficult thing to deal with a DEATH-BED. We are called in to Death-Beds of various kinds:—

The True Pilgrim sends for us to set before him the food on which he has fed throughout his journey. He has a keen appetite. He wants strength and vigour for the last effort; and, then, all is for ever well! He is gone home, and is at rest!

Another man sends for us, because it is decent: or his friends importune him; or his conscience is alarmed: but he is ignorant of Sin and of Salvation: he is either indifferent about both, or he has made up his mind in his own way: he wants the Minister to confirm him in his own views, and smooth over the wound. I have seen such men mad with rage, while I have been beating down their *refuges of lies*, and setting forth to them God's refuge. There is a wise and holy medium to be observed in treating such cases: "I am not come to *daub you over with untempered mortar:* I am not come to send you to the bar of God with *a lie in your right-hand.* But neither am I come to mortify you, to put you to unnecessary pain, to embitter you, or to exasperate you." There is a kindness, affection, tenderness, meekness, and patience, which a man's feelings and conscience will condemn him while he opposes! I have found it a very effectual method to begin with myself; it awakens attention, conciliates the mind, and insi-

nuates conviction :—" Whatever others think of themselves, I stand condemned before God: my heart is so *desperately wicked*, that, if God had not showed me in his Word a remedy in Jesus Christ, I should be in despair: I can only tell you what I am, and what I have found. If you believe yourselves to be what God has told me I am and all men are, then I can tell you where and how to find Mercy and Eternal Life: if you will not believe that you are this sort of man, I have nothing to offer you. I know of nothing else for man, beside that which God has showed me." My descriptions of my own fallen nature have excited perfect astonishment: sometimes my patients have seemed scarcely able to credit me; but I have found that God has fastened, by this means, conviction on the conscience. In some cases, an indirect method of addressing the conscience may apparently be, in truth, the most direct; but we are to use this method wisely and sparingly. It seems to me to be one of the characteristics of the day, in the religious world, to err on this subject. We have found out a CIRCUITOUS way of exhibiting Truth. The plain, direct, simple exhibition of it is often abandoned, even where no circumstances justify and require a more insinuating manner. There is Dexterity indeed, and Address in this; but too little of the simple *Declaration of the testimony of God*, which St. Paul opposes to *excellency of speech or of wisdom*, and to *enticing words of man's wisdom*. We have done very little when we have merely persuaded men to think as we do.

But we have to deal with a worse Death-Bed character, than with the man who opposes the Truth. Some men assent to every thing, which we propose. They will even anticipate us. And yet we see that they mean nothing. I have often

felt when with such persons: "I would they could be brought to contradict and oppose! That would lead to discussion. God might, peradventure, dash the stony heart in pieces. But this heart is like water. The impression dies as fast as it is made." I have sought for such views as might rouse and stir up opposition. I have tried to irritate the torpid mind. But all in vain. I once visited a young Clergyman of this character, who was seized with a dangerous illness at a Coffee-house in town, whither some business had brought him: the first time I saw him, we conversed very closely together; and, in the prospect of Death he seemed solicitous to prepare for it. But I could make no sort of impression upon him: all I could possibly say met his entire approbation, though I saw his heart felt no interest in it. When I visited him a second time, the fear of death was gone; and, with it, all solicitude about religion. He was still civil and grateful, but he tried to parry off the business on which he knew I came. "I will show you, Sir, some little things with which I have worn away the hours of my confinement and solitude." He brought out a quantity of pretty and tasty drawings. I was at a loss how to express, with suitable force and delicacy, the high sense I felt of his Indecorum and Insipidity, and to leave a deep impression on his conscience—I rose, however, instantly—said my time was expired—wished him well, and withdrew.

Sometimes, we have a painful part to act with sincere men, who have been carried too much into the world. I was called in to visit such a man. "I find no comfort," he said. "God veils his face from me. Every thing round me is dark and uncertain." I did not dare to act the flatterer. I said—"Let us look faithfully into the state of things. I should have been surprised if you had

not felt thus. I believe you to be sincere. Your state of feelings evinces your sincerity. Had I found you exulting in God, I should have concluded that you were either deceived or a deceiver: for, while God acts in his usual order, how could you expect to feel otherwise on the approach of death, than you do feel? You have driven hard after the world. Your spirit has been absorbed in its cares. Your sentiment—your conversation have been in the spirit of the world. And have you any reason to expect the response of conscience, and the clear evidence, which await the man who has walked and lived in close friendship with God? You know that what I say is true." His wife interrupted me, by assuring me, that he had been an excellent man. "Silence!" said the dying penitent, "it is all true!"

Soon after I came to St. John's, I was called on to visit a dying lady, whom I saw many times before her death. I found that she had taken God for her portion and rest. She approached him with the penitence of a sinner grateful for his provision of mercy in Christ. She told me she had found religion in her Common Prayer Book. She blessed God that she had "always been kept steady to her Church; and that she had never followed the people called Methodists, who were seducing so many on all sides." I thought it would be unadviseable to attempt the removal of prejudices, which, in her dying case, were harmless; and which would soon be removed by the light which would beam in on her glorified soul. We had more interesting subjects of conversation, from which this would have led us away. Some persons may tax her with a want of charity: but, alas! I fear they are persons, who, knowing more than she did of the doctrines of the Gospel, have so little of its divine charity in their hearts, that, as they

cannot allow for her prejudices, neither would they have been the last to stigmatize her as a dead formalist and a pharisee. God knoweth them that are his; and they are often seen by him, where we see them not. Were a benighted inhabitant of Otaheite to feel the wretchedness of his present life, and lift up his soul to the God he worshipped as a Supreme Being for happiness, no doubt God would hear such a prayer.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

ON THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

Every book really worth a Minister's studying, he ought, if possible, to have in his own library. I have used large libraries, but I soon left them. Time was frittered away: my mind was unconcentrated. Besides, the habit which it begets of turning over a multitude of books, is a pernicious habit. And the usual contents of such libraries are injurious to a spiritual man, whose business it is to transact with men's minds. They have a dry, cold, deadening effect. It may suit dead men, to walk among the dead; but send not a living man to be chilled among the ruins of Tadmor in the Wilderness!

Christianity is so great and surprizing in its nature, that, in preaching it to others, I have no encouragement but the belief of a continued divine operation. It is no difficult thing to change a man's opinions. It is no difficult thing to attach a man to my person and notions. It is no difficult thing to convert a proud man to spiritual pride, or a passionate man to passionate zeal for some religious party. But, to bring a man to love God—to love the law of God, while it condemns him—to loath himself before God—to tread the earth under his feet—to hunger and thirst after God in Christ, and after the mind that was in Christ—with man this is impossible! But God has said it shall be done: and bids me go forth and preach, that by

me, as his instrument, he may effect these great ends: and therefore I go. Yet I am obliged continually to call my mind back to my principles. I feel angry, perhaps, with a man, because he will not let me convert him: in spite of all I can say, he will still love the world.

St. Paul admonishes Timothy to *endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*. It sometimes falls to the lot of a Minister to endure the hard labour of a Nurse, in a greater measure than that of a Soldier. He has to encounter the difficulties of a peculiar situation: he is the Parent of a family of children, of various tempers, manners, habits, and prejudices: if he does not continually mortify himself, he will bear hardly upon some of his children. He has, however, to endure the hardness of calling his child—his friend—to an account; of being thought a severe, jealous, legal man. If a man will let matters take their chance, he may live smoothly and quietly enough; but if he will stir among the servants, and sift things to the bottom, he must bear the consequences. He must account himself *a Man of Strife*. His language must be—"It is not enough that you feed me, or fill my pocket—there is something between me and thee." The most tender and delicate of his flock have their failings. His warmest and most zealous supporters break down some where. A sun-shiny day breeds most reptiles. It is not enough, therefore, that the sun shines out in his church. It is not enough, that numbers shout applause.

A Minister may be placed in a discouraging situation. He may not suit the popular taste. He may not be able to fall into the fashionable style. He may not *play well on an instrument*. Though an effective man, and a man of energy, he may be under a cloud. The door may be shut against him. Yet it is a dangerous thing for such a man to force open the door.

He should rather say—"I have a lesson to learn here. If I teach the people nothing, perhaps they may teach me." The work of Winter is to be done, as well as the work of Summer.

The hardness which I have to endure is this—Here are a number of families, which show me every kind of regard. But I see that they are not right. They somehow so combine the things which they hear, with the things which they do, that I am afraid they will at last *lie down in sorrow!* Here is my difficulty. I must meet them with gentleness; but I must detect and uncover the evil. I shall want real kindness and common honesty, if I do not. *Ephraim hath grey hairs: yet he knoweth it not. Ephraim is a cake not turned.* But, if I tell him these things, he and I shall become two persons. He must however be so touched in private; for he will not be touched in the pulpit. He will say, "I am not the man."

A MINISTER must *keep under his body, and bring it into subjection.* A Newmarket-Groom will sweat himself thin, that he may be fit for his office: *Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we, an incorruptible.*

——— is just come from college. He has a refined, accurate, sensible mind. Some of our friends wish to get him a station at Calcutta. They think him just adapted for that sphere. I differ widely in my view of the matter. A new man, with his college accuracy about him, is not the man for the dissipated and fashionable court at Calcutta. Such a congregation will bid nothing for his acuteness and reasoning. He, who is to talk to them with any effect, must have seen life and the world. He must be able to treat with them on their own ground. And he must be able to do it with the authority of a messenger from God, not with the arts and shifts of human eloquence and rea-

soning. Dr. Patten said admirably well, in a sermon which I heard him preach at Oxford: "Beware how you suffer the infidel to draw you upon metaphysical ground. If he get you there, he will have something to say. The evidences and the declarations of God's word are the weapons with which he must be combated, and before which he must fall."

London is very peculiar as a Ministerial walk. Almost all a Minister can do, is, by the Pulpit and the Pen. His hearers are so occupied in the world, that if he visit them, every minute perhaps brings in some interruption.

It is a serious question—*Whether a Minister ought to preach at all beyond his experience.* He is to stand forth as a witness—but a witness of what he KNOWS, not of what he has been TOLD. He must preach as he feels. If he feels not as he might and ought, he must pray for such feelings; but, till he has them, ought he to pretend to them? Going faster than the experience led, has been the bane of many. Men have preached in certain terms and phrases according to the tone given by others, while the thing has never been made out even to their conviction, much less in their experience.

It is a most important point of duty, in a Minister, TO REDEEM TIME. A young Minister has sometimes called an old one out of his Study, only to ask him how he did: there is a tone to be observed toward such an idler: an intimation may be given, which he will understand, "This is not the house!" In order to redeem time, he must refuse to engage in secular affairs: *No man, that warreth, entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* He must watch, too, against a dozing away of time: the clock-weight goes down slowly, yet it draws all the work with it.

Owen remarks, that it is not sufficiently considered how much a Minister's personal religion is exposed to danger, from the very circumstance of religion being his profession and employment. He must go through the acts of religion: he must put on the appearances of religion: he must utter the language and display the feelings of religion. It requires double diligence and vigilance, to maintain, under such circumstances, the spirit of religion. I have prayed: I have talked: I have preached: but now I should perish, after all, if I did not feed on the bread which I have broken to others.

A minister must cultivate a tender spirit. If he does this so as to carry a savour and unction into his work, he will have far more weight than other men. This is the result of a devotional habit. To affect feeling is nauseous and soon detected: but to feel, is the readiest way to the hearts of others.

The leading defect in Christian Ministers is want of a devotional habit. The Church of Rome made much of this habit. The contests accompanying and following the Reformation, with something of an indiscriminate enmity against some of the good of that Church as well as the evil, combined to repress this spirit in the Protestant writings; whereas the *mind of Christ* seems, in fact, to be the grand end of Christianity in its operation upon man.

There is a manifest want of spiritual influence on the ministry of the present day. I feel it in my own case, and I see it in that of others. I am afraid that there is too much of a low, managing, contriving, manœuvering temper of mind among us. We are laying ourselves out, more than is expedient, to meet one man's taste,

and another man's prejudices. The Ministry is a grand and holy affair; and it should find in us a simple habit of spirit, and a holy but humble indifference to all consequences.

A MAN of the world will bear to hear me read in the desk that awful passage: *Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction; and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life: and few there be that find it.* Nay, he will approve it:—"The Minister is in the desk: he is reading the lesson of the day." But this very man—were I to go home with him, and tell him in his parlour that most of those whom he knows and loves are going on in that road to eternal destruction—this very man would brand the sentiment as harsh and uncharitable. Though uttered by Christ himself, it is a declaration as fanatical and uncandid, in the judgment of the world, as could be put together in language.

MANY hearers cannot enter into the REASONS of the Cross. They adopt what I thing is Butler's grand defect on this subject. He speaks of the Cross as an appointment of God, and THEREFORE to be submitted to: but God has said much in his word of the reasons of this appointment: that *he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth.*

SEVERAL things are required to enable a Minister to attain a proper variety in this manner. He must be in continual practice: if I were to preach but once a month, I should lose the ability of preaching. He must know that his hearers are attached to him—that they will grant him indulgencies and liberties. He

must, in some measure, feel himself above his congregation. The presence of a certain brother chills me: because I feel that I can talk on no one subject in the pulpit, with which he is not far better acquainted than I am.

The first duty of a Minister, is, To call on his hearers to *turn to the Lord*. "We have much to speak to you upon. We have many duties to urge on you. We have much instruction to give you—but all will be thrown away, till you have *turned to the Lord*." Let me illustrate this by a familiar comparison. You see your child sinking in the water: his education lies near your heart: you are anxious to train him up so, that he may occupy well the post assigned to him in life. But, when you see him drowning, the first thoughts are—not how you may educate him, but how you may save him. Restore him to life, and then call that life into action.

A disinterested regard to Truth should be, what it very seldom is, the most striking character in a Christian Minister. His purpose should be to make proselytes to truth, and not to any thing which may be particular in his views of it. "Read my books," says one. "No!" says another, "read mine." And thus religion is taken up by piece-meal; and the mind is diverted from its true nature by false associations. If the teacher, whom this man has chosen for his oracle, disgrace religion by irreligious conduct, he stumbles. He stumbles, because he has not been fixed upon the sole and immoveable basis of the religion of the Bible. The mind well instructed in the Scriptures, can bear to see even its spiritual father make shipwreck of the faith and scandalize the Gospel; but will remain itself unmoved. The man is in possession of a treasure, which,

if others are foolish enough to abandon, yet they cannot detract any thing from the value attached to it in his esteem.

That a Minister may learn how to *magnify his office*, let him study the character, the spirit, and the history of St. Paul. His life and death were one magnifying of his office: mark his object--to win souls!—to execute the will of God! As the man rises in his own esteem, his office sinks; but, as the office rises in his view, the man falls. He must be in constant hostility with himself, if he would magnify his office. He must hold himself in readiness to make sacrifices, when called to do so: he will not barter his office, like Balaam; but will refuse to sell his service, like Micaiah. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, he will refuse to come down from the great work which he has to do. He may be calumniated; but he will avoid hasty vindications of his character: it does not appear that Elisha sent after Naaman to vindicate himself from the falsehoods of Gehazi: there appears to me much true dignity in this conduct: I fear I should have wanted patience to act thus.

Some young Ministers have been greatly injured, by taking up their creed from a sort of second or third rate writers. Toplady, perhaps, has said that he has found his preaching most successful, when it has turned on the grand doctrines of Calvinism. A young man admires Toplady, and adopts the same notion concerning his own ministry. But let him turn to a master on the subject. He will find such a man as Traill handling the Sovereignty of God, and such high points of doctrine, with a holy and heavenly sweetness; which, while it renders it almost impossible not to receive his sentiments, leaves nothing on the mind but a religious savour.

THE grand aim of a Minister must be THE EXHIBITION OF GOSPEL TRUTH. Statesmen may make the greatest blunders in the world, but that is not HIS affair. Like a King's Messenger, he must not stop to take care of a person fallen down: if he can render any kindness consistently with his duty, he will do it; if not, he will prefer his office.

OUR method of preaching is not that by which Christianity was propagated: yet the genius of Christianity is not changed. There was nothing in the primitive method set or formal. The primitive Bishop stood up, and read the Gospel, or some other portion of Scripture, and pressed on the hearers, with great earnestness and affection, a few plain and forcible truths evidently resulting from that portion of the Divine Word: we take a text, and make an oration. Edification was then the object of both speaker and hearers; and, while this continues to be the object, no better method can be found. A parable, or history, or passage of Scripture, thus illustrated and enforced, is the best method of introducing truth to any people who are ignorant of it, and of setting it home with power on those who knew it; and not formal, doctrinal, argumentative discourses. TRUTH and SYMPATHY are the soul of an efficacious Ministry.

The Puritans were still farther removed from the primitive method of preaching: they would preach fifteen or sixteen sermons on a text. A primitive Bishop would have been shocked with one of our Sermons; and, such is our taste, we should be shocked with his. They brought forward Scripture: we bring forward our statements. They directed all their observations to throw light on Scripture: we quote Scripture to throw light on our observations. More faith and more grace would make us better preachers, for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speak-*

eth. Chrysostom's was the right method. Leighton's Lectures on Peter approach very near to this method.

In acting on matter, the art of man is mighty. The steam-engine is a mighty machine. But, in religion, the art of man is mere feebleness. The armour of Saul is armour in the camp of the Israelites, or in the camp of the Philistines—but we want the sling and the stone. I honour Metaphysicians, Logicians, Critics, and Historians—in their places. Look at facts. Men, who lay out their strength in statements, preach Churches empty. Few men have a wisdom so large, as to see that the way which they cannot attain may yet be the best way. I dare not tell most academical, logical, frigid men how little I account of their opinion, concerning the true method of preaching to the popular ear. I hear them talk, as utterly incompetent judges. Such men would have said St. Paul was fit only for the Tabernacle. What he would have said they were fit for, I cannot tell. They are often great men —first-rate men—unequalled men—in their class and sphere—but it is not THEIR sphere to manage the world.

If a minister could work miracles, he would do little more than interest the curiosity of men——"I want to eat, and I want to drink, and I do it. I get on with difficulty enough, as things are; and you talk about treating with heaven! I know nothing of the matter, and I want no such thing"—This is the language of man's heart. A FUTURE thing! An INDEFINITELY FUTURE thing! No! if a man could even authoritatively declare, that the Day of Judgment would be this day seven years, he would have little influence on mankind. Very few would be driven from the playhouse—very few from the gaming table—very few

from the brothel.—The din on 'Change would be very little diminished. I frequently look back on the early periods of my life, and imagine myself treating with such a character as I know I then was. I say to myself, "What now can I possibly say, that will affect and interest that young fellow of eighteen?"

Some Christian Ministers fail in their effect on their hearers, by not entering as Philosophers into the state of human nature. They do not consider how low the patient is reduced—that he is to be treated more as a child—that he is to have *milk* administered to him, instead of *strong meat*. They set themselves to plant principles and prove points, when they should labour to interest the heart. But, after all, men will carry their natural character into their ministry. If a man has a dry, logical, scholastic turn of mind, we shall rarely find him an interesting preacher. One in a thousand may meet him, but not more.

The Christian will sometimes be brought to walk in a solitary path. God seems to cut away his props, that he may reduce him to Himself. His religion is to be felt as a personal, particular, appropriate possession. He is to feel, that, as there is but one Jehovah to bless, so there seems to him as though there was but one penitent in the universe to be blessed by Him. Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre was brought to this state. She might have said, "I know not where Peter is: he is gone away—perhaps into the world—perhaps to weep over his fall. I know not where John is. What are the feelings and states of my brethren, I know not. I am left here alone. No one accompanies and strengthens me. But, if none other will seek my Lord, yet will I seek Him!" There is a commanding energy in religious sympathy. A Minister, for exam-

ple, while his preaching seems effective, and life and feeleng show themselves around him, moves on with ease and pleasure. But there is much of the man here. If God change the scene—if discouragement meet him—if he seem to be laid by, in any measure, as an instrument—if the love of his hearers to his person and ministry decay—this is a severe trial: yet most of us need this trial, that we may be reduced simply to God, and may feel that the whole affair is between Him and ourselves. A dead fish will swim with the stream, whatever be its direction: but a living one will not only resist the stream; but, if he chooses, it can swim against it. The soul, that lives from God, will seek God, and follow God—more easily and pleasantly, indeed, if the stream flow towards the point whither God leads; but, still, it will follow God as its sole rest and centre, though the stream of men and opinions would hurry it away from Him.

Gravity is, doubtless, obligatory on Ministers. The Apostle connects it with sincerity. Yet it must be natural—not affected. Some men give every thing in an oracular style: this looks like affectation, and will disgust others: they will attribute it to religion: but this is not a sanctified gravity. Other men are always disposed to levity: not that a man of original fancy is to be condemned, for thinking in his own way: but the Minister must consider that he is a man of a consecrated character: if it should not be difficult to himself to make transitions from levity to gravity, it will be difficult to carry others with him therein. Who has not felt, if God brings him into a trying situation, in which he sees that it is an awful thing to suffer or to die, that Gravity is then natural? every thing else is offensive! That, too, is evil, which lets down the tone of a company: when a Minister loses his gravity, the company will take liberties with him.

Yet, with a right principle. we must not play the fool. Gravity must be natural and simple. There must be urbanity and tenderness in it. A man must not formalize on every thing. He, who formalizes on every thing, is a fool; and a grave fool is perhaps more injurious than a light fool.

We are called to build a spiritual house. One workman is not to busy himself in telling another his duty. We are placed in different circumstances, with various talents: and each is called to do what he can. Two men, equally accepted of God. may be exceedingly distinct in the account which they will give of their employ.

A regular Clergyman can do no more in the discharge of his duty, than our Church requires of him. He may fall far short of her requirements; but he cannot exceed, by the most devoted life, the duties which she has prescribed. What man on earth is so pernicious a drone, as an idle Clergyman!—a man, engaged in the most serious profession in the world: who rises to eat, and drink, and lounge, and trifle; and goes to bed; and then rises again, to do the same! Our office is the most laborious in the world. The mind must be always on the stretch. to acquire wisdom and grace, and to communicate them to all who come near. It is well, indeed, when a Clergyman of genius and learning devotes himself to the publication of classics and works of literature, if he cannot be prevailed on to turn his genius and learning to a more important end. Enter into this kind of society—what do you hear?—"Have you seen the new edition of Sophocles?"—"No! is a new edition of Sophocles undertaken?"——and this makes up the conversation. and these are the ends, of men who. by profession. should win souls! I received a most useful hint from Dr. Bacon, then Father of the University, when I wa-

at College. I used frequently to visit him at his Living, near Oxford: he would say to me, "What are you doing? What are your studies?" "I am reading so and so"—"You are quite wrong. When I was young I could turn any piece of Hebrew into Greek verse with ease. But, when I came into this parish, and had to teach ignorant people, I was wholly at a loss: I had no furniture. They thought me a great man, but that was their ignorance; for I knew as little as they did, of what it was most important to them to know. Study chiefly what you can turn to good account in your future life." And yet this wise man had not just views of serious religion: he was one of those who are for reforming the parish—making the maids industrious, and the men sober and honest—but when I ventured to ask, "Sir, must not all this be effected by the infusion of a divine principle into the mind?—a union of the soul with the great head of influence?"—"No more of that, no more of that, I pray!"

A WISE Minister stands between practical Atheism and Religious Enthusiasm.

A SERMON, that has more head infused into it than heart, will not come home with efficacy to the hearers. "You must do so and so: such and such consequences will follow if you do not: such and such advantages will result from doing it:"—this is cold, dead, and spiritless, when it stands alone; or even when it is most prominent. Let the preacher's head be stored with wisdom; but above all, let his heart so feel his subject, that he may infuse life and interest into it, by speaking like one who actually possesses and feels what he says.

FAITH is the master-spring of a Minister. "Hell is before me, and thousands of souls shut up there in everlasting agonies—Jesus Christ stands forth to save men from rushing into this bottomless abyss—He sends me to proclaim his Ability and his Love: I want no fourth idea!—every fourth idea is contemptible!—every fourth idea is a grand impertinence!".

THE meanness of the earthen vessel, which conveys to others the Gospel Treasure, takes nothing from the value of the treasure. A dying hand may sign a Deed of Gift of incalculable value. A shepherd's boy may point out the way to a philosopher. A beggar may be the bearer of an invaluable present.

A WRITER of Sermons has often no idea how many words he uses, to which the common people affix either no meaning, or a false one. He speaks, perhaps, of "relation to God:" but the people, who hear him, affix no other idea to the word, than that of father, or brother, or relative. The preacher must converse with the people, that he may acquire their words and phrases.

IT sometimes pleases God to disqualify Ministers for their work, before he takes them to their reward. Where he gives them wisdom to perceive this, and grace to acquiesce in the dispensation—such a close of an honourable life, where the desire to be publicly useful survives the power, is a loud AMEN to all former labours.

ON

INFIDELITY AND POPERY.

INFIDEL writings are ultimately productive of little or no danger to the Church of God. Nay, we are less at a loss in judging of the wisdom of Providence in permitting them, than we are in judging of many other of its designs. They may shake the simple, humble, spiritual mind; but they are, in the end, the means of enlightening and settling it.

There are but two sorts of people in the world. Some walk *by the light of the Lord*; and all others lie *in the wicked one, in darkness, and in the shadow of death.* Where there is not an enlightened, simple, humble, spiritual mind, notions and opinions are of little consequence. The impudent and refuted misrepresentations of Infidels may turn a dark mind to some other notions and way of thinking; but it is in the dark still. Till a man sees by *the light of the Lord*, every change of opinions is only putting a new dress on a dead carcase, and calling it alive.

The grace of God must give simplicity. Wherever that is, it is a security against dangerous error: wherever it is not, erroneous opinions may perhaps less predispose the mind against the truth of God in its lively power on the soul, than true notions destitute of all life and influence do.

Yet the writings of Infidels must be read with caution and fear. There are cold, intellectual, speculative, malignant foes to Christianity. I dare not tamper with such, when I am in my right mind. I have received serious injury, for a time, even when my duty

has called me to read what they have to say. The daring impiety of Belsham's answer to Wilberforce ruffled the calm of my spirit. I read it over while at Bath in the Autumn of 1798. I waked in pain, about 2 o'clock in the morning. I tried to cheer myself by an exercise of faith on Jesus Christ. I lifted up my heart to Him, as sympathizing with me, and engaged to support me. Many times have I thus obtained quiet and repose: but now I could lay no hold on him: I had given the enemy an advantage over me: my habit had imbibed poison: my nerves trembled: my strength was gone!—"Jesus Christ sympathize with you, and relieve you! It is all enthusiasm! It is Idolatry! Jesus Christ has preached his sermons, and done his duty, and is gone to heaven? And there he is, as other good men are! Address your prayers to the Supreme Being!"—I obtain relief in such cases, by dismissing from my thoughts all that enemies or friends can say. I will have nothing to do with Belsham or with Wilberforce. I come to Christ Himself. I hear what He says. I turn over the Gospels. I read his conversations. I dwell especially on his farewell discourses with his disciples, in St. John's Gospel. If there be meaning in words, and if Christ were not a deceiver or deceived, the reality of the Christian's life, in Him and from Him by faith, is written there as with a sun-beam.

This temptation besets me to this day, and I know not that I have any other which is so particular in its attacks upon me. I am sometimes restless in bed: and, when I find myself so, I generally think that the parenthesis cannot be so well employed as in prayer. While my mind is thus ascending to Christ and communing with him, it often comes across me—"What a fool art thou to imagine these mental effusions can be known to any other Being! what a senseless enthusiast to imagine that the man who was nailed to a cross can have any knowledge of these secrets of thy soul!"

On one of these occasions it struck me with great and commanding evidence—"Why might not St. John, in the Isle of Patmos—imprisoned perhaps in a cave—why might not he have said so? Why might not he have doubted whether Christ the crucified could have knowledge of his feelings, when he *was in the Spirit on the Lord's day?* He had no doubt communion with Christ in the Spirit, before he had those palpable evidences of his presence which immediately followed."

In the permission of certain bold infidel characters and writings, we may discern plain evidences of that awful system of judicial government with which God has been pleased to rule the world. Where there is a moral indisposition, where men are inclined to be deceived, where they are waiting as it were for a leader—there he sends such men or such writings, as harden them in their impiety: while a teachable and humble mind will discern the true character of such men or writings, and escape the danger.

I can conceive a character much more pernicious in its influence, than the daring and impudent Infidel. A man—in the estimation of all the world modest, amiable, benevolent—who should, with deep concern, lament the obligation under which he feels himself to depart from the religion of Europe, the religion of his Country, the religion of his Family; and should profess his unfeigned desire to find this religion true, but that he cannot possibly bring his mind to believe it, and that for such and such reasons: when he should thus introduce all the strongest points that can be urged on the subject.

But God governs the world. It is not in his design to permit such men to arise. The Infidel has always had something about him, which has ascertained his obliquity to the eye, that has not been dimmed by the moral indisposition of the heart.

The low and scurrilous writers against Revelation carry their own condemnation with them. They are like an ill-looking fellow, who comes into a Court of Justice to give evidence, but carries the aspect, on the first glance, of a Town-Bully, ready to swear whatever shall be suggested to him.

Burke has painted the spirit of Democracy to the life. I have fallen in with some Democrats, who knew nothing of me. They have been subjects of great curiosity, when I could forget the horrid display of Sin that was before me. I saw a malignant eye—a ferocity—an intensity of mind on their point. Viewed in its temper and tendencies, Jacobinism is Devilism—Belialism. It takes the yoke of God and man—puts it on the ground—and stamps on it. Every man is called out into exertion against it. It is an inveterate, malignant, blaspheming, atheistical, fierce spirit. It seems a toss-up with these men, whether Satan himself shall govern the world. Before such men, I say not a word. Our Master has commanded us *not to cast pearls before swine*. I am vastly delighted with character—true and original character: but this is an awful and affecting display of it.

The Church has endured a PAGAN and a PAPAL persecution. There remains for her an INFIDEL persecution—general, bitter, purifying, cementing.

It is, perhaps, impossible, in the very nature of things, that such another scheme as Popery could be invented. It is, in truth, *the Mystery of Iniquity*: that it should be able to work itself into the simple, grand, sublime, holy institution of Christianity; and so to interweave its abomination with the truth, as to occupy the strongest passions of the soul, and to control

the strongest understandings! While Pascal can speak of Popery as he does, its influence over the mass of the people can excite no surprise. Those two master principles—That we must believe as the Church ordains, and That there is no salvation out of this Church—oppose, in the ignorance and fear which they beget, an almost insuperable barrier against the truth.

I HAVE not such expectations of a Millennium as many entertain: yet I believe that the figures and expressions of prophecy have never received their accomplishment. They are too grand and ample, to have been fulfilled by any state, which the Church has hitherto seen. Christianity has yet had no face suitable to its dignity. It has savoured hitherto too much of man—of his institutions—of his prejudices—of his follies—of his sin. It must be drawn out—depicted—exhibited—demonstrated to the world. Its chief enemies have been the men by whom, under the profession of *Hail, Master!* it has been distorted, abused, and vilified.

Popery was the master-piece of Satan. I believe him utterly incapable of such another contrivance. It was a systematic and infallible plan, for forming manacles and mufflers for the human mind. It was a well-laid design to render Christianity contemptible, by the abuse of its principles and its institutions. It was formed to overwhelm—to enchant—to sit as *the great Whore, making the Earth drunk with her fornications.*

The Infidel Conspiracy approaches nearest to Popery. But Infidelity is a suicide. It dies by its own malignity. It is known and read of all men. No man was ever injured essentially by it, who was fortified with a small portion of the genuine spirit of Christianity—its contrition and its docility. Nor is it

one in its efforts: its end is one; but its means are disjointed, various, and often clashing. Popery debases and alloys Christianity; but Infidelity is a furnace, wherein it is purified and refined. The injuries done to it by Popery, will be repaired by the very attacks of Infidelity.

In the mean time, Christianity wears an enchanting form to all, who can penetrate through the mists thrown round it by its false friends and its avowed foes. The exiled French Priest raises the pity and indignation of all Christians, while he describes the infernal plots of the Infidel Conspirators against Christianity, and shows them in successful operation against his Church.* We seem, for a while, to forget her errors; and we view her for the moment, only so far as she possesses Christianity in common with ourselves. But, when he charges the origin of this Infidel Conspiracy on the principles asserted by the Waldenses or the Church of Geneva, the enchantment dissolves. We see that he is under the influence of a sophism; by which, having imposed upon himself, he would impose upon others. With him, Christianity and his Church mean one and the same thing. A separation from his Church, is a separation from Christianity; and proceeds on principles which lead necessarily, if pursued to their issues, to every abomination of Infidelity. But let him know that the Church of Geneva protested against the false friend of Christianity; and that, if the avowed enemy of Christianity had then elevated himself, she would have protested with equal zeal against him. Let him know, that, if his Church had listened to the voice of the Reformer, the enemy of Christianity would have wanted ground for footing to his attacks. The Papist falsely charges the Reformer, as the father of Infidelity: the Infidel maliciously confounds Popery and Christianity: but the true Christian is as far from the licentiousness

* Alluding to Barruel's Memoirs of Jacobinism. J. P.

of the Infidel, as he is from the corruption of the Papist.

I am not inclined to view things in a gloomy aspect. Christianity must undergo a renovation. If God has sent his Son, and has declared that he will exalt him on his throne—the earth and all that it inherit are contemptible in the view of such a plan! If this be God's design—proceed it does, and proceed it will. Christianity is such a holy and spiritual affair, that perhaps all human institutions are to be destroyed to make way for it. Men may fashion things as they will; but, if there is no effusion of the Spirit of God on their institutions, they will remain barren and lifeless. Many Christians appear to have forgotten this.

ON A

CHRISTIAN'S DUTY

IN THESE EVENTFUL TIMES.

Ours is a period of no common kind. The path of duty to a Christian is now unusually difficult. It seems to me, however, to be comprehended in two words—Be QUIET and USEFUL. The precept is short; but the application of it requires much grace and wisdom. Take not a single step out of a quiet obscurity, to which you are not compelled by a sense of utility.

Two parties have divided the world.

The JACOBINS are desperadoes: the earth's torment and plague. Bishop Horsley said well of them, lately from the pulpit—"These are they, who have poisoned Watt's Hymns for Children. These are they, who are making efforts to contaminate every means of access to the public mind. And what is their aim?—What are their pretensions?—That they will have neither Lord nor King over them. But, verily, one is their King: whose name, in the Hebrew tongue, is *Abaddon;* but, in the Greek tongue, he is called *Apollyon;* and, in plain English—'The *Devil*.' My soul come not thou near the tents of these wicked men!"

"But the ANTIJACOBINS?"—Their project, as a body, leaves God out of the question. Their proposal is unholy. I cannot be insensible to the Security, Order, and Liberty, with which these kingdoms are favoured above all other nations; but I cannot go forth with these men, as one of their party. I cannot throw up

my hat, and shout "Huzza!" Wo to the world, if even THEY prevail!

The world is a lying, empty pageant; and these men are ensnared with the show. My part in it, as a Christian, is to act with simplicity as the servant of God. What does God bid me do? What, in this minute of time, which will be gone and carry me with it into Eternity—what is my path of duty? While enemies blaspheme, and friends are beguiled, let me *stand on my watch-tower*, with the Prophet, *listening what the Lord God shall say to me*. In any scheme of man I dare not be drunken. *We, who are of the day, must be sober*. Churchman or Dissenter, if I am a true Christian, I shall talk thus to my connections. The sentiment of the multitude is ensnaring; but the multitude is generally wrong. I must beware of the contagion. Not that I am to push myself into consequence. The matter is between me and my God—Not one step out of a holy quiet and obscurity, but in order to utility.

Yet we must be active and bold, whenever duty calls us to be so. My own conduct, with respect to the religious world, is too much formed on my feelings. I see it in what I deem a lamentable state; but I seem to say, "Well! go on talking, and mistaking, and making a noise: only make not a noise here:" and then I retire into my closet, and shrink within myself. But, had I more Faith, and Simplicity, and Love, and Self-Denial, I might do all I do in my present sphere, but I should throw myself in the midst of them, and entreat and argue and remonstrate.

But then such a man must give himself up as a Sacrifice. He would be misrepresented and calumniated from many quarters. But he would make up his account for such treatment. How would St. Paul have acted in such a state of the Church? Would he not have displayed that warm spirit, which made him say, *O foolish Galatians! who hath bewitched you?* and

that holy self-denial which dictated, *I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more exceedingly I love you the less I be loved?*

It is not to be calculated, how much a single man may effect, who throws his whole powers into a thing. Who, for instance, can estimate the influence of VOLTAIRE? He shed an influence of a peculiar sort over Europe. His powers were those of a gay buffoon—far different from those of HUME, and others of his class—but he threw himself wholly into them. It is true these men meet the wickedness or the imbecility of the human mind; but there are many right-hearted people, who hang a long time on the side of pure, silent, simple religion. Let a man, who sees things as I do, throw himself out with all his powers, to rescue and guide such persons.

ON

FORTIFYING YOUTH

AGAINST INFIDEL PRINCIPLES.

I NEVER gathered from Infidel Writers, when an avowed Infidel myself, any solid difficulties, which were not brought to my mind by a very young child of my own. "Why was sin permitted?"—"What an insignificant world is this to be redeemed by the Incarnation and Death of the Son of God!"—"Who can believe that so few will be saved?"—Objections of this kind, in the mind of reasoning young persons, prove to me that they are the growth of fallen nature.

The nurse of Infidelity is Sensuality. Youth are sensual. The Bible stands in their way. It prohibits the indulgence of *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life*. But the young mind loves these things; and therefore, it hates the Bible which prohibits them. It is prepared to say, "If any man will bring me arguments against the Bible, I will thank him: if not, I will invent them."

As to infidel arguments, there is no weight in them. They are jejune and refuted. Infidels are not themselves convinced by them.

In combating this evil in Youth, we must recollect the proverb, that "a man may bring his horse to the water, but cannot make him drink." The minds of the young are pre-occupied. They will not listen. Yet a crisis may come. They will stop, and bethink themselves.

One promising method with them, is, TO APPEAL TO

FACTS. What sort of men are infidels? They are loose—fierce—overbearing men. There is nothing in them like sober and serious inquiry. They are the wildest fanatics on earth. Nor have they agreed among themselves on any scheme of truth and felicity. Contrast with the character of Infidels that of real Christians.

It is advantageous to dwell, with Youth, on THE NEED AND NECESSITIES OF MAN. "Every pang and grief tells a man that he needs a helper: but Infidelity provides none. And what can its schemes do for you in death?"

Impress them with A SENSE OF THEIR IGNORANCE. I silence myself, many times a day, by a sense of my own ignorance.

APPEAL TO THEIR CONSCIENCES. "Why is it that you listen to Infidelity? Is not Infidelity a low, carnal, wicked game? Is it not the very picture of the Prodigal—*Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me?*"—The question why Infidelity is received, exposes it, and shows it to the light. WHY—WHY will a man be an Infidel? Your children may urge difficulties: but tell them that inexplicable difficulties surround you: you are compelled to believe, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, whether you will or no; and shall you not be a believer in the hundredth instance from choice?

DRAW OUT A MAP OF THE ROAD OF INFIDELITY. It will lead them to such stages, at length, as they never could suspect. *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?*

The SPIRIT AND TONE OF YOUR HOUSE will have great influence on your children. If it is what it ought to be, it will often fasten conviction on their minds, however wicked they may become. I have felt the truth of this in my own case: I said, "My father is right, and I am wrong! Oh, *let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*"

The bye-conversations in a family are, in this view, of unspeakable importance.

On the whole, arguments addressed to the heart press more forcibly than those addressed to the head. When I was a child, and a very wicked one too, one of Dr. Watts' Hymns sent me to weep in a corner. The lives in Janeway's Token had the same effect. I felt the influence of faith in suffering Christians. The character of young Samuel came home to me, when nothing else had any hold on my mind.

ON THE

MANAGEMENT OF CHILDREN.

GREAT wisdom is requisite in correcting the evils of children. A child is bashful, perhaps: but in stimulating this child, we are too apt to forget future consequences. "Hold up your head. Don't be vulgar." At length they hold up their heads; and acquire such airs, that, too late, we discover our error. We forgot that we were giving gold, to purchase dross. We forgot that we were sacrificing modesty and humility, to make them young actors and old tyrants.*

* The reader cannot but admire the sentiments, which Bishop Hurd has, on this subject, put into the mouth of Mr. Locke, one of his supposed interlocutors in the Dialogue on Foreign Travels.

"Bashfulness is not so much the effect of an ill education, as the proper gift and provision of wise nature. Every stage of life has its own set of manners, that is suited to it, and best becomes it. Each is beautiful in its season; and you might as well quarrel with the child's rattle, and advance him directly to the boy's top and span-farthing, as expect from diffident youth the manly confidence of riper age.

"Lamentable in the mean time, I am sensible, is the condition of my good lady: who, especially if she be a mighty well-bred one, is perfectly shocked at the boy's awkwardness; and calls out on the tailor, the dancing-master, the player, the travelled tutor, any body and every body, to relieve her from the pain of so disgraceful an object.

"She should, however, be told, if a proper season and words soft enough could be found to convey the information, that the odious thing, which disturbs her so much, is one of nature's signatures impressed on that age: that bashfulness is but the passage from one season of life to another; and that as the body is then the least graceful, when the limbs are making their last efforts and hastening to their just proportion, so the manners are least easy and disengaged, when the mind, conscious and impatient of its imperfections, is stretching all its faculties to their full growth."—*See Bishop Hurd's Moral and Political Dialogues, ed.* 6th. London, 1788. vol. 3d. pp. 99, 100, 101. J. P.

Christians are imbibing so much of the cast and temper of the age, that they seem to be anxiously tutoring their children, and preparing them by all manner of means, not for a better world, but for the present. Yet in nothing should the simplicity of faith be more unreservedly exercised, than with regard to children. Their appointments and stations, yea even their present and eternal happiness or misery, so far as they are influenced by their states and conditions in life, may be decided by the most minute and trivial events, all of which are in God's hand, and not in ours. An unbelieving spirit pervades, in this respect, too intimately the Christian World.

When I meet children to instruct them, I do not suffer one grown person to be present. The Moravians pursue a different method. Some of their elder brethren even sit among the children, to sanction and encourage the work. This is well, provided children are to be addressed in the usual manner. But that will effect little good. Nothing is easier than to talk to children; but, to talk to them as they ought to be talked to, is the very last effort of ability. A man must have a vigorous imagination. He must have extensive knowledge to call in illustrations from the four corners of the earth: for he will make little progress, but by illustration. It requires great genius, to throw the mind into the habit of children's minds. I aim at this, but I find it the utmost effort of ability. No sermon ever put my mind half so much on the stretch. The effort is such, that, were one person present, who was capable of weighing the propriety of what I said, it would be impossible for me to proceed: the mind must, in such a case, be perfectly at its ease: it must not have to exert itself under cramps and fetters. I am surprised at nothing which Dr. Watts

did, but his Hymns for Children. Other men could have written as well as he, in his other works; but how he wrote these hymns, I know not. Stories fix children's attention. The moment I begin to talk in any thing like an abstract manner, the attention subsides. The simplest manner in the world will not make way to children's minds for abstract truths. With stories I find I could rivet their attention for two or three hours.

Children are very early capable of impression. I imprinted on my daughter the idea of Faith, at a very early age. She was playing one day with a few beads, which seemed to delight her wonderfully. Her whole soul was absorbed in her beads. I said—"My dear, you have some pretty beads there." "Yes, Papa!" "And you seem to be vastly pleased with them." "Yes, Papa!" "Well now, throw 'em behind the fire." The tears started into her eyes. She looked earnestly at me, as though she ought to have a reason for such a cruel sacrifice. "Well, my dear, do as you please; but you know I never told you to do any thing, which I did not think would be good for you." She looked at me a few moments longer, and then summoning up all her fortitude—her breast heaving with the effort—she dashed them into the fire. "Well," said I: "there let them lie: you shall hear more about them another time; but say no more about them now." Some days after, I bought her a box full of larger beads, and toys of the same kind. When I returned home, I opened the treasure and set it before her: she burst into tears with ecstasy. "Those, my child," said I, "are yours, because you believed me, when I told you it would be better for you to throw those two or three paltry beads behind the fire. Now that has brought you this treasure. But now, my dear,

remember, as long as you live, what FAITH is. I did all this to teach you the meaning of Faith. You threw your beads away when I bid you, because you had faith in me that I never advised you but for your good. Put the same confidence in God. Believe every thing that he says in his word. Whether you understand it or not, have faith in him that he means your good."

ON

FAMILY WORSHIP.

Family religion is of unspeakable importance. Its effect will greatly depend on the sincerity of the head of the family, and on his mode of conducting the worship of his household. If his children and servants do not see his prayers exemplified in his temper and manners, they will be disgusted with religion. Tediousness will weary them. Fine language will shoot above them. Formality of connection or composition in prayer they will not comprehend. Gloominess or austerity of devotion will make them dread religion as a hard service. Let them be met with smiles. Let them be met as friends. Let them be met as for the most delightful service in which they can be engaged. Let them find it short, savoury, simple, plain, tender, heavenly. Worship, thus conducted, may be used as an engine of vast power in a family. It diffuses a sympathy through the members. It calls off the mind from the deadening effect of worldly affairs. It arrests every member, with a morning and evening sermon, in the midst of all the hurries and cares of life. It says, "There is a God!" "There is a spiritual world!" "There is a life to come!" It fixes the idea of responsibility in the mind. It furnishes a tender and judicious father or master with an opportunity of gently glancing at faults, where a direct admonition might be inexpedient. It enables him to relieve the weight with which subordination or service often sits on the minds of inferiors.

In my family-worship I am not the reader, but employ one of my children. I make no formal comment on the Scripture: but, when any striking event or sentiment arises, I say, "Mark that!" "See how God judges of that thing!" Sometimes I ask what they think of the matter, and how such a thing strikes them. I generally receive very strange, and sometimes ridiculous answers; but I am pleased with them: attention is all alive, while I am explaining wherein they err, and what is the truth. In this manner I endeavour to impress the spirit and scope of the passage on the family.

I particularly aim at the eradication of a false principle, wonderfully interwoven with the minds of children and servants—they take their standard from the neighbourhood and their acquaintance, and by this they judge of every thing. I endeavour to raise them to a persuasion, that God's will in Scripture is the standard; and that this standard is perpetually in opposition to that corrupt one around and before them.

The younger children of the family will soon have discernment enough to perceive that the Bible has a holiness about it, that runs directly contrary to the stream of opinion. And then, because this character is so evident, and so inseparable from the Scripture, the heart will distaste and reject it. Yet the standard must be preserved. If a man should lower it, they would soon detect him; and he must, after all, raise them up to the right standard again. Much may be effected by manner, as to impressing truth; but, still, truth will remain irksome, till God touch the heart.

I read the Scriptures to my family in some regular order: and am pleased to have thus a lesson found for me. I look on the chapter of the day as a lesson sent for that day; and so I regard it as coming

from God for the use of that day, and not of my own seeking.

I find it easy to keep up the attention of a congregation, in comparison of that of my family. I have found the attention best gained, by bringing the Truths of Scripture into comparison with the Facts which are before our eyes. It puts more *stimuli* into family-expositions. I never found a fact lost, or the current news of the day fail of arresting the attention. "How does the Bible account for that fact? That man murdered his Father—This or that thing happened in our house to-day—What does the Scripture say of such things?"

It is difficult to fix and quiet your family. The servants are eager to be gone, to do something in hand. There has been some disagreement, perhaps, between them and their mistress. We must seize opportunities. We must not drive hard at such times as these. Regularity, however, must be enforced. If a certain hour is not fixed and adhered to, the family will inevitably be found in confusion.

Religion should be prudently brought before a family. The old Dissenters wearied their families. Jacob reasoned well with Esau, about the tenderness of his children and his flocks and herds. Something gentle, quiet, moderate should be our aim. There should be no scolding: it should be mild and pleasant.

I avoid absolute uniformity; the mind revolts at it: though I would shun eccentricity, for that is still worse. At one time I would say something on what is read: but, at another time, nothing. I make it as NATURAL as possible: "I am a religious man: you are my children and my servants: it is NATURAL that we should do so and so."

Nothing of superstition should attach to family-duty. It is not absolutely and in all cases indispensable. If unavoidably interrupted, we omit it: it is well. If I were peremptorily ordered, as the

Jews were, to bring a lamb, I must be absolute. But this service is my liberty, not my task. I do not, however, mean in any degree to relax the proper obligation.

Children and servants should see us acting on the Psalmist's declaration, *I will speak of thy testimonies before Kings*. If a great man happens to be present, let them see that I deem him nothing before the Word of God.

ON THE

INFLUENCE

OF THE

PARENTAL CHARACTER.

The influence of the parental character on children is not to be calculated. Every thing around has an influence on us. Indeed the influence of things is so great, that, by familiarity with them, they insensibly urge us on principles and feelings which we before abhorred. I knew a man who took in a democratical paper, only to laugh at it. But, at length, he had read the same things again and again, so often, that he began to think there must be some truth in them; and that men and measures were really such as they were so often said to be. A drop of water seems to have no influence on the stone; but it will, in the end, wear its way through. If there be, therefore, such a mighty influence in every thing round us, the Parental Influence must be great indeed.

Consistency is the great character, in good parents, which impresses children. They may witness much temper; but if they see their Father "keep the even tenor of his way," his imperfections will be understood and allowed for as reason opens. The child will see and reflect on his parent's intention: and this will have great influence on his mind. This influence may, indeed, be afterward counteracted: but that only proves that contrary currents may arise, and carry the child another way. Old Adam may be too strong for young Melancthon.

The implantation of principles is of unspeakable

importance, especially when culled from time to time out of the Bible. The child feels his parent's authority supported by the Bible, and the authority of the Bible supported by his parent's weight and influence. Here are data—fixed data. A man can very seldom get rid of these principles. They stand in his way. He wishes to forget them, perhaps; but it is impossible.

Where Parental influence does not convert, it hampers. It hangs on the wheels of evil. I had a pious Mother, who dropped things in my way. I could never rid myself of them. I was a professed Infidel: but then I liked to be an Infidel in company, rather than when alone. I was wretched when by myself. These principles, and maxims, and data spoiled my jollity. With my companions I could sometimes stifle them: like embers we kept each other warm. Besides, I was here a sort of Hero. I had beguiled several of my associates into my own opinions, and I had to maintain a character before them. But I could not divest myself of my better principles. I went with one of my companions to see "The Minor." He could laugh heartily at Mother Cole—I could not. He saw in her the picture of all who talked about religion—I knew better. The ridicule on regeneration was high sport to him—to me, it was none: it could not move my features. He knew no difference between regeneration and transubstantiation—I did. I knew there was such a thing. I was afraid and ashamed to laugh at it. Parental influence thus cleaves to a man: it harasses him—it throws itself continually in his way.

I find in myself another evidence of the greatness of Parental Influence. I detect myself to this day, in laying down maxims in my family, which I took up at three or four years of age, before I could possibly know the reason of the thing.

It is of incalculable importance to obtain a hold

on the conscience. Children have a conscience; and it is not seared, though it is evil. Bringing the eternal world into their view—planning and acting with that world before us—this gains, at length, such a hold on them, that, with all the Infidel poison which they may afterward imbibe, there are few children who, at night—in their chamber—in the dark—in a storm of thunder—will not feel. They cannot cheat like other men. They recollect that ETERNITY, which stands in their way. It rises up before them, like the ghost of Banquo to Macbeth. It goads them: it thunders in their ears. After all, they are obliged to compound the matter with conscience, if they cannot be prevailed on to return to God without delay. "I MUST be religious, one time or other. That is clear. I cannot get rid of this thing. Well! I will begin at such a time. I will finish such a scheme, and then!"

The opinions—the spirit—the conversation—the manners of the parent, influence the child. Whatever sort of man he is, such, in a great degree, will be the child; unless constitution or accident give him another turn. If the parent is a fantastic man—if he is a genealogist, knows nothing but who married such an one and who such an one—if he is a sensualist, a low wretch—his children will usually catch these tastes. If he is a literary man—his very girls will talk learnedly. If he is a griping, hard, miserly man—such will be his children. This I speak of as GENERALLY the case. It may happen, that the parent's disposition may have no ground to work on in that of the child. It may happen that the child may be driven into disgust: the Miser, for instance, often implants disgust, and his son becomes a Spendthrift.

After all, in some cases, perhaps, every thing seems to have been done and exhibited by the pious parent in vain. Yet he *casts his bread upon the waters*. And,

perhaps, after he has been in his grave twenty years, his son remembers what his father told him.

Besides, Parental Influence must be great, because God has said that it shall be so. The parent is not to stand reasoning and calculating. God has said that his character shall have influence.

And this appointment of Providence, becomes often the punishment of a wicked man. Such a man is a complete SELFIST. I am weary of hearing such men talk about their "family"—and their "family".—they "must provide for their family." Their family has no place in their REAL REGARD. They push for themselves. But God says—"No! You think your children shall be so and so. But they shall be rods for your own backs. They shall be your curse. They shall rise up against you." The most common of all human complaints is—Parents groaning under the vices of their children! This is all the effect of Parental Influence.

In the exercise of this influence there are two leading dangers to be avoided.

Excess of SEVERITY is one danger. My Mother, on the contrary, would talk to me, and weep as she talked. I flung out of the house with an oath—but wept too when I got into the street. Sympathy is the powerful engine of a mother. I was desperate: I would go on board a privateer. But there are soft moments to such desperadoes, God does not, at once, abandon them to themselves. There are times when the man says—"I should be glad to return: but I should not like to meet that face!" if he has been treated with severity.

Yet excess of LAXITY is another danger. The case of Eli affords a serious warning on this subject. Instead of his mild expostulation on the flagrant wickedness of his sons—*Nay, my sons, it is no good report that I hear*—he ought to have exercised his authority as a parent and magistrate in punishing and restraining their crimes.

REMARKS ON AUTHORS.

When I look at the *mind* of Lord Bacon—it seems vast, original, penetrating, analogical, beyond all competition. When I look at his *character*—it is wavering, shuffling, mean. In the closing scene, and in that only, he appears in true dignity, as a man of profound contrition.

Baxter surpasses, perhaps, all others, in the grand, impressive, and persuasive style. But he is not to be named with Owen as to furnishing the student's mind. He is, however, multifarious, complex, practical.

Clarke has, above oll other men, the faculty of lowering the life and spiritual sense of Scripture to such perfection, as to leave it like dry bones, divested of every particle of marrow or oil. South is nearer the truth. He tells more of it: but he tells it with the tongue of a viper, for he was most bitterly set against the Puritans. But there is a spirit and life about him. He must and will be heard. And, now and then, he darts on us with an unexpected and incomparable stroke.

The modern German writers, and the whole school formed after them, systematically and intentionally confound vice and virtue, and argue for the passions against the morals and institutions of society. There never was a more dangerous book written, than one that Mrs. Wolstoncroft left imperfect, but which

Godwin published after her death. Her "Wrongs of Women" is an artful apology for adultery: she labours to interest the feelings in favour of an adultress, by making her crime the consequence of the barbarous conduct of a despicable husband, while she is painted all softness and sensibility. Nothing like this was ever attempted before the modern school.

"Some men," said Dr. Patten to me, "are always crying Fire! Fire!" To be sure—where there is danger, there ought to be affectionate earnestness. Who would remonstrate, coldly and with indifference, with a man about to precipitate himself from Dover Cliff, and not rather snatch him forcibly from destruction? Truth, in its living influence on the heart, will show itself in consecratedness and holy zeal. When teachers of religion are destitute of these qualities, the world readily infers that religion itself is a farce. Let us do the world justice. It has very seldom found a considerate, accommodating, and gentle, but withal earnest, heavenly, and enlightened teacher. When it has found such, Truth has received a very general attention. Such a man was Hervey, and his works have met their reward.

Homer approaches nearest of all the heathen poets to the grandeur of Hebrew Poetry. With the theological light of Scripture, he would have wonderfully resembled it.

Hooker is incomparable in strength and sanctity. His first books are wonderful. I do not so perfectly meet him, as he advances toward the close.

Loskiel's "Account of the Moravian Missions among the North American Indians" has taught me two

things. I have found in it a striking illustration of the *uniformity with which the grace of God operates on men.* Crantz, in his "Account of the Missions in Greenland," had shown the grace of God working on a Man-Fish: on a stupid—sottish—senseless creature—scarcely a remove from the fish on which he lived. Loskiel shows the same grace working on a Man-Devil: a fierce—bloody—revengeful warrior—dancing his infernal war-dance with the mind of a fury. Divine grace brings these men to the same point. It quickens stimulates, and elevates the Greenlander: it raises him to a sort of new life: it seems almost to bestow on him new senses: it opens his eye, and bends his ear, and rouses his heart: and what it adds—it sanctifies. The same grace tames the high spirit of the Indian: it reduces him to the meekness, and docility, and simplicity of a child. The evidence arising to Christianity from these facts is, perhaps, seldom sufficient, by itself *to convince the gainsayer:* but, to a man who already believes, it greatly strengthens the reasons of his belief. I have seen also in these books, that the fish-boat, and the oil, and the tomahawk, and the cap of feathers excepted—*a Christian Minister has to deal with just the same sort of creatures, as the Greenlander and the Indian, among civilized nations.*

Owen stands at the head of his class of divines. His scholars will be more profound and enlarged, and better furnished, than those of most other writers. His work on the Spirit has been my treasure-house, and one of my very first-rate books. Such writers as Riccaltoun rather disqualify than prepare a Minister for the immediate business of the pulpit. Original and profound thinkers enlarge his views, and bring into exercise the powers and energies of his own mind, and should therefore be his daily companions. Their matter must, however, be ground down before it will

be fit for the pulpit. Such writers as Owen, who, though less original, have united Detail with Wisdom, are copious in proper topics, and in matter better prepared for immediate use, and in furniture ready finished as it were for the mind.

Paley is an unsound casuist, and is likely to do great injury to morals. His extenuation of the crimes committed by an intoxicated man, for instance, is fallacious and dangerous. Multiply the crime of intoxication into the consequences that follow from it, and you have the sum total of the guilt of a drunken man.

Rutherford's Letters is one of my classics. Were truth the beam, I have no doubt, that if Homer and Virgil and Horace and all that the world has agreed to idolize were weighed against that book, they would be lighter than vanity. He is a real original. There are in his Letters some inexpressibly forcible and arresting remonstrances with unconverted men.

I should not recommend a young Minister to pay much deference to the Scotch Divines. The Erskines, who were the best of them, are dry, and laboured, and prolix, and wearisome. He may find incomparable matter in them, but he should beware of forming his taste and manner after their model. I want a more kind-hearted and liberal sort of divinity. He had much better take up Bishop Hall. There is a set of excellent, but wrong-headed men, who would reform the London preachers on a more elaborate plan. They are not philosophers who talk thus. If Owen himself were to rise from the grave, unless it were for the influence of the great name which he would bring with him, he might close his

days with a small congregation in some little meeting-house.

Shakspeare had a low and licentious taste. When he chose to imagine a virtuous and exalted character, he could completely throw his mind into it, and give the perfect picture of such a character. But he is at home in Falstaff. No high, grand, virtuous, religious aim beams forth in him. A man, whose heart and taste are modelled on the Bible, nauseates him in the mass, while he is enraptured and astonished by the flashes of his pre-eminent genius.

"Have you read my Key to the Romans?" said Dr. Taylor, of Norwich, to Mr. Newton. "I have turned it over." "You have turned it over! And is this the treatment a book must meet with, which has cost me many years of hard study? Must I be told, at last, that you have 'turned it over,' and then thrown it aside? You ought to have read it carefully, and weighed deliberately what comes forward on so serious a subject." "Hold! You have cut me out full employment, if my life were to be as long as Methuselah's. I have somewhat else to do in the short day allotted me, than to read whatever any one may think it his duty to write. When I read, I wish to read to good purpose; and there are some books, which contradict on the very face of them what appear to me to be first principles. You surely will not say I am bound to read such books. If a man tells me he has a very elaborate argument to prove that two and two make five, I have something else to do than to attend to this argument. If I find the first mouthful of meat which I take from a fine-looking joint on my table is tainted, I need not eat through it to be convinced I ought to send it away."

I NEVER read any sermons so much like WHITFIELD's manner of preaching, as LATIMER's. You see a simple mind, uttering all its feelings; and putting forth every thing as it comes, without any reference to books or men, with a *naivetè* seldom equalled.

I ADMIRED WITSIUS' "Œconomy of the Covenants," but not so much as many persons. There is too much system. I used to study Commentators and Systems; but I am come almost wholly, at length, to the Bible. Commentators are excellent, in general, where there are but few difficulties; but they leave the harder knots still untied. I find in the Bible, the more I read, a grand peculiarity, that seems to say to all who attempt to systematize it—"I am not of your kind. I am not amenable to your methods of thinking. I am untractable in your hands. I stand alone. The great and wise shall never exhaust my treasures. By figures and parables I will come down to the feelings and understandings of the ignorant. Leave me as I am, but study me incessantly." CALVIN's Institutes are, to be sure, great and admirable, and so are his Commentaries; but, after all, if we must have Commentators—as we certainly must—POOLE is incomparable, and I had almost said abundant of himself.

YOUNG is, of all other men, one of the most striking examples of the disunion of Piety from Truth. If we read his most true, impassioned, and impressive estimate of the World and of Religion, we shall think it impossible that he was uninfluenced by his subject. It is, however, a melancholy fact, that he was hunting after preferment at eighty years old; and felt and spoke like a disappointed man. The truth was pictured on his mind in most vivid colours. He felt it, while he was writing. He felt himself on a

retired spot; and he saw Death, the mighty Hunter, pursuing the unthinking world. He saw Redemption —its necessity and its grandeur; and, while he looked on it, he spoke as a man would speak whose mind and heart are deeply engaged. Notwithstanding all this, the view did not reach his heart. Had I preached in his pulpit with the fervour and interest that his "Night Thoughts" discover, he would have been terrified. He told a friend of mine, who went to him under religious fears, that he must GO MORE INTO THE WORLD!

ON THE

SCRIPTURES.

MISCELLANEOUS REMARKS

ON THE

SCRIPTURES.

I AM an entire disciple of Butler. He calls his book "Analogy:" but the great subject from beginning to end, is HUMAN IGNORANCE. Berkeley has done much to reduce man to a right view of his attainments in real knowledge; but he goes too far: he requires a demonstration of self-evident truths: he requires me to demonstrate that that table is before me. Beattie has well replied to this error, in his "Immutability of Truth;" though it pleased Mr. Hume to call that book—"Philosophy for the Ladies."

Metaphysicians seem born to puzzle and confound mankind. I am surprised to hear men talk of their having demonstrated such and such points. Even Andrew Baxter, one of the best of these metaphysicians, though he reasons and speculates well, has not demonstrated to my mind one single point by his reasonings. They know nothing at all on the subject of moral and religious truth, beyond what God has revealed. I am so deeply convinced of this, that I can sit by and smile at the fancies of these men; and especially when they fancy they have found out DEMONSTRATIONS. Why there are Demonstrators, who will carry the world before them; till another man rises, who demonstrates the very opposite, and then, of course, the world follows him!

We are mere mites creeping on the earth, and oftentimes conceited mites too. If any Superior Being

will condescend to visit us and teach us, something may be known. "Has God spoken to man?" This is the most important question that can be asked. All Ministers should examine this matter to the foundation. Many are culpably negligent herein. But, when this has been done, let there be no more questionings and surmises. My son is not, perhaps, convinced that I am entitled to be his teacher. Let us try. If he finds that he knows more than I do—well: if he finds that he knows nothing, and submits—I am not to renew this conviction in his mind every time he chooses to require me to do so.

If any honest and benevolent man felt scruples in his breast concerning Revelation, he would hide them there; and would not move wretched men from the only support, which they can have in this world. I am thoroughly convinced of the want of real integrity and benevolence in all Infidels. And I am as thoroughly convinced of the want of real belief of the Scriptures, in most of those who profess to believe them.

Metaphysicians can unsettle things, but they can erect nothing. They can pull down a church, but they cannot build a hovel. The Hutchinsonians have said the best things about the Metaphysicians. I am no Hutchinsonian; yet I see that they have data, and that there is something worth proving in what they assert.

PRINCIPLE is to be distinguished from PREJUDICE. The man, who should endeavour to weaken my belief of the truth of the Bible, and of the fair deduction from it of the leading doctrines of Religion, under the notion of their being prejudices, should be regarded by me as an assassin. He stabs me in my dearest hopes: he robs me of my solid happiness: and he has no equivalent to offer. This species of

evidence of the truth and value of Scripture is within the reach of all men. It is my strongest. It assures me as fully as a voice could from heaven, that my principles are not prejudices. I see in the Bible my heart and the world painted to the life; and I see just that provision made, which is competent to the highest ends and effects on this heart and this world.

The Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers: some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it, which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners is the grand Truth presented every where, and in all points of light; but *the pure in heart* sees a thousand traits of the Divine Character, of himself, and of the world —some striking and bold, others cast as it were into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined—some direct, others by way of intimation or inference.

He, who reads the Scriptures only in the translation, is but meanly prepared as a public teacher. The habit of reading the Scriptures in the original throws a new light and sense over numberless passages. The original has, indeed, been obtruded so frequently, and sometimes so absurdly, on the hearers, that their confidence in the translation has been shaken. The judicious line of conduct herein, is—To think with the wise, and talk with the vulgar—to attain, as far as possible and by all means, the true sense and force of every passage; and, wherever that differs from the received translation, work it in imperceptibly, that the hearers may be instructed while they receive no prejudice against that form in which they enjoy the Scriptures.

No man will preach the Gospel so FREELY as the Scriptures preach it, unless he will submit to talk like an Antinomian, in the estimation of a great body of Christians; nor will any man preach it so PRACTICALLY as the Scriptures, unless he will submit to be called, by as large a body, an Arminian. Many think that they find a middle path: which is, in fact, neither one thing nor another; since it is not the incomprehensible, but grand plan of the Bible. It is somewhat of human contrivance. It savours of human poverty and littleness.

WERE the Scriptures required to supply a direct answer to every question which even a sincere inquirer might ask, it would be impracticable. They form, even now, a large volume. The method of instruction adopted in them is, therefore, this:—The rule is given: the doctrine is stated: examples are brought forward—cases in point, which illustrate the rule and the doctrine: and this is found sufficient for every upright and humble mind.

THE simple and unprejudiced study of the Bible is the death of religious extravagance. Many read it under a particular bias of mind. They read books written by others under the same views. Their preaching and conversation run in the same channel. If they could awaken themselves from this state; and come to read the whole Scripture for every thing which they could find there, they would start as from a dream—amazed at the humble, meek, forbearing, holy, heavenly character of the simple religion of the Scriptures, to which, in a greater or less degree, their eyes had been blinded.

THE right way of interpreting Scripture, is, to take it as we find it, without any attempt to force it into any particular system. Whatever may be fairly inferred from Scripture, we need not fear to insist on. Many passages speak the language of what is called Calvinism, and that in almost the strongest terms: I would not have a man clip and curtail these passages, to bring them down to some system: let him go with them in their free and full sense; for, otherwise, if he do not absolutely pervert them, he will attenuate their energy. But, let him look at as many more, which speak the language of Arminianism, and let him go all the way with these also. God has been pleased thus to state and to leave the thing; and all our attempts to distort it, one way or the other, are puny and contemptible.

A MAN may find much amusement in the Bible—variety of prudential instruction—abundance of sublimity and poetry: but, if he stops there, he stops short of its great end; for, *the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*. The grand secret in the study of the Scriptures, is, to discover Jesus Christ therein, *the way, the truth, and the life*.

IN reading the Scriptures, we are apt to think God farther removed from US, than from the Persons to whom He spake therein: the knowledge of God will rectify this error; as if God COULD BE farther from us than from them. In reading the Old Testament especially, we are apt to think that the things spoken there, in the prophet Hosea for instance, have little relation to US: the knowledge taught by Christian Experience will rectify this error; as if religion were not always the SAME SORT of transaction between God and the soul.

THERE are two different ways of treating the Truths of the Gospel—the SCIENTIFIC and the SIMPLE. It was seriously given me in charge, when I first entered into the Ministry, by a female who attended my Church, that I should study Baxter's "Catholic Theology." I did so: but the best idea that I acquired from this labour was, that the most sagacious and subtle men can make out little beyond the plain, obvious, and broad statement of Truth in the scriptures. I should think it a very proper and suitable punishment for a conceited and pragmatical dogmatist, to oblige him to digest that book. Another great truth, indeed, we may gather from it: and that is that the intemperate men, on either side, are very little aware of the consequences, which may be legitimately drawn from their principles. Even Dr. Owen has erred. I would not compare him, in this respect, with Baxter; for he has handled his points with far greater wisdom and simplicity: yet he errs *ex abundanti*. He attempts to make out things with more accuracy, and clearness, and system, than the Bible will warrant. The Bible scorns to be treated scientifically. After all your accurate statements, it will leave you aground. The Bible does not come round, and ask our opinion of its contents. It proposes to us a Constitution of Grace, which we are to receive, though we do not wholly comprehend it. Numberless questions may be started on the various parts of this Constitution. Much of it I cannot understand, even of what respects myself; but I am called to act on it. And this is agreeable to analogy. My child will ask me questions on the fitness or unfitness of what I enjoin: but I silence him: "You are not yet able to comprehend this: your business is, to believe me and obey me." But the Schoolmen will not be satisfied with this view of things: yet they can make nothing out satisfactorily. They have their *de re*, and their *de nomine*: but nothing is gained by these attempts at clearness

and nice distinctions. These very accurate men, who think they adjust every thing with precision, cannot agree among one another, and do little else than puzzle plainer minds.

WHATEVER definitions men have given of Religion, I can find none so accurately descriptive of it as this—that it is such a belief of the Bible as maintains a living influence on the heart. Men may speculate, criticise, admire, dispute about, doubt, or believe the Bible; but the RELIGIOUS MAN is such, because he so believes it, as to carry habitually a practical sense of its truths on his mind.

THE fears of the general class of Christians are concerned about the superstructure of religion; but those of speculative minds chiefly relate to the foundation. The less thinking man doubts whether he is on the foundation: he, whose mind is of a more intellectual turn, doubts concerning the foundation itself. I have met with many of these speculative cases. Attacks of this nature are generally sudden. A suspicion will, by surprise, damp the heart; and, for a time, will paint the Bible as a fable. I have found it useful, on such occasions, to glance over the whole thread of Scripture. The whole, presented in such a view, brings back the mind to its proper tone: the indelible characters of Simplicity and Truth impress with irresistible effect that heart, which can discern them as having once felt them.

ON THE

OLD AND NEW DISPENSATIONS.

The Old and New Testaments contain but one scheme of Religion. Neither part of this scheme can be understood without the other; and therefore great errors have arisen from separating them. They are like the rolls on which they were anciently written, before books of the present form were invented. It is but one subject and one system, from beginning to end; but the view which we obtain of it grows clearer and clearer, as we unwind the roll that contains it.

There is one grand and striking feature of distinction between the spirit of the Old Testament Dispensation and that of the New.

The Old Dispensation was a dispensation of limits, waymarks, forms, and fashions: every thing was weighed and measured: if a man did but gather sticks on the Sabbath, he was to be stoned without mercy: if a Jew brought an offering, it was of no avail if not presented at the door of the Tabernacle: the manner, the time, the circumstances were all minutely instituted; and no devotion or piety of spirit could exempt a man from the yoke of all these observances, for God had appointed these as the way in which he chose that a devout Jew should express his state of mind.

But the New Dispensation changed the whole system. Religion was now to become more peculiarly a spiritual transaction between God and the soul:

and independent, in a higher measure than ever before, of all positive institutions. Its few simple institutions had no further object, than the preservation of the unity, order, soundness, and purity of the Church—in regard to doctrine, government and discipline.

Nor had these appointments that character of unaccommodating inflexibility, which marked the institutions of the Old Dispensation. All nations, men of all habits and manners, are to drink life from the beneficent stream as it flows. It is to throw down no obstructions, that are not absolutely incompatible with its progress. But it is appointed to pervade every place which it visits. Some, it enters without obstruction, and passes directly through. In some, it meets with mounds and obstacles; yet rises till it finds an entrance. Others are so fenced and fortified, that it winds round them and flows forward: continuing to do so, till it, at length, finds some method of insinuating itself.

And thus the Dispensation of Grace in the Church accommodates itself to the various tempers and habits which it finds in different ages, nations, and bodies of men: it leaves in existence numberless opinions and prejudices, if they are not inconsistent with its main design, and mingles and insinuates itself among them. It has not limited Christianity to any one form of Church Polity, ordained and perfected in all its parts by divine authority: but Christians are left to act herein according to circumstances, and to the exercise of sound discretion under those circumstances.

ON

TYPICAL AND ALLEGORICAL

EXPLANATIONS OF SCRIPTURE.

It might be expected, that, when God had determined to send his Son into the world, there would be a train and concatenation of circumstances preparatory to his coming—that the History, which declared that he was to come, should exhibit many persons and things, which should form a grand preparation for the event, though not so many as an absurd fancy might imagine.

There is a certain class of persons, who wish to rid themselves of the Types. Sykes insists that even the Brazen Serpent is called in by our Lord by way of illustration only, and not as a designed type. Robinson, of Cambridge, when he began to verge towards Socinianism, began to ridicule the types: and to find matter of sport in the pomegranates and the bells of the High Priest's garment. At all events, the subject should not be treated with levity and irreverence: it deserves serious reflection.

With respect to the expediency of employing the types much in the pulpit, that is another question. I seldom employ them. I am jealous for Truth and its Sanctions. The Old Dispensation was a Typical Dispensation: but the New is a dispensation unrolled. When speaking of the Typical Dispensation, we must admire a master, like St. Paul. But to us, modesty becomes a duty in treating such subjects in our ministry. Remember, "*This is none other but the house of God! and this is the gate of heaven!* How dreadful if I lead thousands with nonsense!—if I lose the opportunity of impressing solid truths!—if I waste their precious time!"

A Minister should say to himself: I would labour to cut off occasions of objecting to the truth. I would labour to grapple with men's consciences. I would show them that there is no strange twist in our view of religion. I must avoid as much as possible, having my judgment called in question: many watch for this, and will avail themselves of any advantage. Some who hear me, are thus continually seeking excuses for not listening to the warnings and invitations of the word: they are endeavouring to get out of our reach; but I would hold them fast with such passages as, "*What shall a man give in exchange for his soul!*"

Many men labour to make the Bible THEIR Bible. This is one way of getting its yoke off their necks. The MEANING, however, of the Bible, is the Bible. If I preach, then, on Imputed Righteousness, for instance, why should I preach from *the skies pour down righteousness*, and then anathematize men for not believing the doctrine, when it is not declared in the passage, and there are hundreds of places so expressly to the point.

Most of the folly on this subject of allegorical interpretation, has arisen from a want of holy awe on the mind. An evil fashion may lead some men into it; and so far, the case is somewhat extenuated. We should ever remember, however, that it is a very different thing to allegorize the New Dispensation from allegorizing the Old: the New is a Dispensation of substance and realities.

When a careless young man, I remember to have felt alarms in my conscience from some preachers: while others, from this method of treating their subjects, let me off easily. I heard the man as a weak allegorizer: I despised him as a foolish preacher: till I met with some plain, simple, solid man who seized and urged the obvious meaning. I shall, therefore.

carry to my grave a deep conviction of the danger of entering far into typical and allegorical interpretations.

Accommodation of Scripture, if sober, will give variety. The Apostles do this so far as to show that it may have its use and advantage. It should, however, never be taken as a ground-work, but employed only in the way of allusion. I may use the passage, *There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother*, by way of allusion to Christ; but I cannot employ it as the ground-work of a discourse on him.

ON THE

DIVERSITY OF CHARACTER

IN

CHRISTIANS,

AND ON

CORRECTING THE DEFECTS IN OUR CHARACTER.

IN DISCOVERING AND COUNTERACTING THE DEFECTS OF OUR OWN CHARACTER, it is of chief importance that we really *intend* to ascertain the truth.

The INTENTION is extremely defective in us all. The man, who thinks he has such honest intention, yet has it very imperfectly. He says—"Touch me: but touch me like a Gentleman. Do not intrude on the delicacies of society." The real meaning of which is, that he has no intention of hearing the truth from you. A man, who has a wound to be healed, comes to the surgeon with such an intention to get it healed, that if he suspected his skill or his fidelity he would seek another.

Intention, or a man's really desiring to know the truth concerning himself, would produce ATTENTION. He would soon find, that there is little close business in a man, who does not withdraw from the world.

He will begin with self-suspicion. "Perhaps I am such or such a man. I see defects in all my friends, and I must be a madman not to suppose that I also have mine. I see defects in my friends, which they

not only do not themselves see; but they will not suffer others to show these defects to them. I must, therefore, take it for granted that I am a more foolish and pragmatical fellow than I can conceive."

If he begin thus, then he will be willing to proceed a step further: "Let me try if I cannot reach these defects." I have found out myself by seeing my picture in another man. I would choose men of my own constitution: other men would give me no proper picture of myself. In such men, I can see actions to be ridiculous or absurd, when I could not have seen them to be so in myself. We may learn some features of our portrait from enemies: an enemy gives a hard feature probably, but it is often a truer likeness than can be obtained from a friend. What with your friend's tenderness for you, and your own tenderness for yourself, you cannot get at the true feature. We should, moreover, encourage our friends. You cannot, in one case in ten, go to a man on a business of this nature, without offending him. He will allege such and such excuses for the defect, and fritter it away to nothing. This shows the hypocrisy—the falsehood—the self-love—and the flattery of the heart. This endeavour to conceal or palliate defects, instead of a desire to discover them, grows up with us from infancy. There is something so deceitful in sin! A man is brought *to believe his own lie!* He is so accustomed to hide himself from himself, that he is surprised when another detects and unmasks him. Hazael verily believed himself incapable of becoming what the prophet foretold.

Many motives urge us to attempt a rectification of our defects. Consider the importance of character: he, who says he cares not what men think of him, is on a very low form in the school of experience and wisdom: character and money effect almost every thing. It should be considered, too, how much we have smart-

ed for want of attending to our defects : nineteen out of twenty of our smarting times, arise from this cause.

In counteracting our defects, however, we should be cautious not to blunder by imitation of others. There are such men in the world as Saint-Errants. One of these men takes up the history of Ignatius Loyola ; and nothing seems worthy of his endeavours, but to be just such a man in all the extravagancies of his character and conduct. We should search till we find where our character fails, and then amend it—not attempt to become another man.

A wise man, who is seriously concerned to learn the truth respecting himself, will not spurn it even from a fool. The great men, who kept fools in their retinue, learnt more truth from them than from their companions. A real self-observer will ask whether there is any truth in what the fool says of him. Nay, a truth, that may be uttered in envy or anger, will not lose its weight with him. The man, who is determined to find happiness, must bear to have it even beaten into him. No man ever found it by chance, or "yawned it into being with a wish." When I was young, my mother had a servant whose conduct I thought truly wise. A man was hired to brew ; and this servant was to watch his method, in order to learn his art. In the course of the process, something was done which she did not understand. She asked him, and he abused her with the vilest epithets for her ignorance and stupidity. My mother asked her when she related it, how she bore such abuse. "I would be called," said she, "worse names a thousand times, for the sake of the information which I got out of him."

If a man would seriously set himself to this work, he must retire from the crowd. He must not live in a bustle. If he is always driving through the business of the day, he will be so in harness as not to observe the road he is going.

He must place perfect standards before his eyes.

Every man has his favourite notions ; and, therefore, no man is a proper standard. The perfect standard is only to be found in Scripture. Elijah meets Ahab, and holds up the perfect standard before his eyes, till he shrinks into himself.* I have found great benefit in being sickened and disgusted with the false standards of men. I turn, with stronger convictions, to the perfect standard of God's Word.

He should also *commune with his own heart upon his bed*—"How did I fall, at such or such a time, into my peculiar humours! Had any other man done so, I should have lost my patience with him."

Above all, he must make his defects matter of constant prayer—*Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Men are to be estimated, as Johnson says, by the MASS OF CHARACTER. A block of tin may have a grain of silver, but still it is tin ; and a block of silver may have an alloy of tin, but still it is silver. The mass of Elijah's character was excellence ; yet he was not without the alloy. The mass of Jehu's character was base: yet he had a portion of zeal which was directed by God to great ends. Bad men are made the same use of as scaffolds : they are employed as means to erect a building, and then are taken down and destroyed.

We must make great allowance for constitution. I could name a man, who, though a good man, is more unguarded in his tongue than many immoral persons: shall I condemn him? he breaks down here, and almost

* 1 Kings, xviii, 17, &c.

here only. On the other hand, many are so mild and gentle, as to make one wonder how such a character could be formed without true grace entering into its composition.

God has given to every man a peculiar constitution. No man is to say, "I am such or such a man, and I can be no other—such or such is my way, and I am what God made me." This is true, in a sound sense; but, in an unsound sense, it has led men foolishly and wickedly to charge their eccentricities, and even their crimes, on God. It is every man's duty to understand his own constitution; and to apply to it the rein or the spur, as it may need. All men cannot do, nor ought they to do, all things in the same way, nor even the same things. But there are common points of duty, on which all men of all habits are to meet. The free horse is to be checked, perhaps, up-hill, and the sluggish one to be urged: but the same spirit, which would have exhausted itself before, shows itself probably in resistance down-hill, when he feels the breeching press upon him behind—but he must be whipped out of his resistance.

There is a large class of Christians, who want discrimination in religion. They are sound and excellent men, but they are not men of deep experience. They are not men of Owen's, Gilpin's, Rutherford's, Adam's, or Brainerd's school. They have a general, but not a minute acquaintance, with the combat between Sin and Grace in the heart. I have learnt not to bring deeply experimental subjects before such persons. They cannot understand them, but are likely to be distressed by them. This difference between persons of genuine piety arises from constitution—or from the manner in which the grace of God first met

them—or from the nature and degree of temptation through which God has led them. A mind finely constituted, or of strong passions—a mind roused in its sins, rather than one drawn insensibly—a mind trained in a severe school for high services—is generally the subject of this deeply interior acquaintance with religion.

There is a great diversity of character among real Christians. Education, Constitution, and Circumstances will fully explain this diversity.

He has seen but little of life, who does not discern every where the effects of education on men's opinions and habits of thinking. Two children bring out of the nursery that, which displays itself throughout their lives. And who is the man, that can rise above his dispensation, and can say, "You have been teaching me nonsense?"

As to constitution—look at Martin Luther: we may see the man every day: his eyes, and nose, and mouth attest his character. Look at Melancthon: he is like a snail with his couple of horns: he puts out his horns and feels—and feels—and feels. No education could have rendered these two men alike. Their difference began in the womb. Luther dashes in saying his things: Melancthon must go round about—he must consider what the Greek says, and what the Syriac says. Some men are born minute men—lexicographers—of a German character; they will hunt through libraries to rectify a syllable. Other men are born keen as a razor: they have a sharp, severe, strong acumen: they cut every thing to pieces: their minds are like a case of instruments; touch which you will, it wounds; they crucify a modest man. Such men should aim at a right knowledge of character. If they attained this, they would find out the sin that easily besets them. The greater the capacity of

such men, the greater their cruelty. They ought to blunt their instruments. They ought to keep them in a case. Other men are ambitious—fond of power: pride and power give a velocity to their motions. Others are born with a quiet, retiring mind. Some are naturally fierce, and others naturally mild and placable. Men often take to themselves great credit for what they owe entirely to nature. If we would judge rightly, we should see that narrowness or expansion of mind, niggardliness or generosity, delicacy or boldness, have less of merit or demerit than we commonly assign to them.

Circumstances, also, are not sufficiently taken into the account, when we estimate character. For example—we generally censure the Reformers and Puritans as dogmatical, morose, systematic men. But, it is easier to walk on a road, than to form that road. *Other men laboured, and we have entered into their labours.* In a fine day, I can walk abroad; but, in a rough and stormy day, I should find it another thing to turn Coachman and dare all weathers. These men had to bear the burden and heat of the day: they had to fight against hard times: they had to stand up against learning and power. Their times were not like ours: a man may now think what he will, and nobody cares what he thinks. A man of that school was, of course, stiff, rigid, unyielding. Tuckney was such a man: Whichcot was for smoothing things, and walking abroad. We see circumstances operating in many other ways. A Minister unmarried, and the same man married, are very different men. A Minister in a small parish, and the same man in a large sphere where his sides are spurred and goaded, are very different men. A Minister on tenter-hooks—harassed—schooled, and the same man nursed—cherished—put into a hot-house, are very different men. Some of us are hot-house plants. We grow tall: not better—not stronger. Talents are among the cir-

cumstances which form the diversity of character. A man of talents feels his own powers, and throws himself into that line which he can pursue with most success. Saurin felt that he could flourish—lighten—thunder—enchant like a magician. Every one should seriously consider, how far his talents and turn of mind and circumstances drive him out of the right road. It is an easy thing for a man of vigour to bring a quiet one before his bar: and it is as easy for this quiet man to condemn the other: yet both may be really pious men—serving God with their best powers. *Every man has his peculiar gift of God; one after this manner, and the other after that.*

ON THE

FALLEN NATURE OF MAN.

I SEEM to acquire little new knowledge on any subject, compared to that which I acquire concerning man. This subject is inexhaustible. I have lately read Colquhon's Treatise on the "Police of the Metropolis," and Barruel's "Memoirs of Jacobinism." When we preachers draw pictures of human nature in the pulpit, we are told that we calumniate it. Calumniate it!—Let such censurers read these writers, and confess that we are novices in painting the vices of the heart. All of us live to make discoveries of the evils of the heart—not of its virtues. All our new knowledge of human nature is occupied with its evil.

BARTHOLOMEW Fair is one of the most perfect exhibitions of unrestrained human nature in the whole world. The Monkey, the Tyger, the Wolf, the Hog, and the Goat, are not only to be found in their own, but in human form; with all their savageness, brutality, and filthiness. It displays human nature in its most degraded, ridiculous, and absurd conditions. The tyger may be seen in a quiescent state, if we pass through Dyot Street: he couches there: he blinks. But, at Bartholomew Fair, he is rampant—vigorous—fierce. Passing through a Fair in a country town, I witnessed a most instructive scene. Two withered, weather-beaten wretches were standing at the door of a show-cart, and receiving two-pences from sweet, innocent, ruddy country girls, who paid their money, and

dropped their curtsies; while these wretches smiled at their simplicity, and clapped them on the back as they entered the door. What a picture this of Satan! He sets off his shows, and draws in heedless creatures, and takes from them every thing they have good about them! There was a fellow dressed out as a zany, with a hump back and a hump belly, a lengthened nose, and a lengthened chin. To what a depth of degradation must human nature be sunk to seek such resources! I derived more instruction from this scene, than I could have done from many elaborate theological treatises.

View man on whatever side we can—in his sensualities, or in his ferocities—in the sins of his flesh, or in the sins of his spirit:—catch him when and where you will—his condition is deplorable. While he is sunk in the mass himself, he has no perception of his state: but, when he begins to emerge, he looks down with amazement. He sees but little, however, of its abomination; because he has still an affinity with the evil.

Human nature is like the sea, which gains by the flow of the tide in one place, what it has lost by the ebb in another. A man may acquiesce in the method which God takes to mortify his pride; but he is in danger of growing proud of the mortification: and so in other cases.

ON THE

NEED OF GRACE.

THERE is something so remarkable in the genius and spirit of the Gospel, that it is not to be understood by any force of speculation and investigation! Baxter attempted this method, and found it vain. The state of the heart has the chief influence in the search after truth. Humility, contrition, simplicity, sanctity—these are the handmaids of the understanding in the investigation of religion.

How is it that some men labour in divine things night and day, but labour in vain? How is it that men can turn over the Bible from end to end, to support errors and heresies—absurdities and blasphemies? They take not the SPIRIT with the WORD. A spiritual understanding must be given—a gracious perception—a right taste.

"A VERY extraordinary thing" said one, "if I, who have read the Bible over and over in the original languages—have studied it day and night—and have written criticisms and comments on it: a very extraordinary thing that I should not be able to discover that meaning in the Scriptures, which is said to be so plain that *a way-faring man though a fool shall not err* in discovering it!" And so it is extraordinary till we open this Bible; and there we see the fact explained. The man who approaches the word of God

in his own wisdom, shall not find what the fool shall discover under the teaching of divine wisdom : *For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent* —and *God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.*

God, in his Providence, seems to make little account of the measures and contrivances of men, in accomplishing his designs. He will do the work, and his hand will be seen in the doing of it. We are obliged to wait for the tide. When that flows, and the wind sets in fair, let us hoist the sails. When the tide has left a ship on the beach, an army may attempt to move it in vain; but, when she is floated by the water, a small force moves her. We must wait for openings in Providence. In this light I view the darkness of the Heathen World. Let us follow every apparent leading of Providence, in our endeavours to communicate light to the Heathen ; but, still, the opening and the whole work must be of God. Thousands, indeed, hear the Gospel, who are no more impressed by it than though they were Heathens. The minds of some men will stand as it were a regular blockade, and yet yield to a side-blow—sit unchanged under a searching ministry, and yet fall beneath a casual word. I know such cases. We might account, indeed, for them, in some measure, as philosophers. The mind, which plants itself against and repels the formal and avowed attacks of the preacher, may be surprised by a hint addressed, perhaps, to another : yet, after all, the whole work is of God. We may make very little, therefore, of the vehicle. The Gospel—the wants of men—the indisposition of the heart—and the mighty power of God—are always and universally the same. By whatever vehicle God conveys that mighty energy, which disposes man to find the relief of his wants in the Gospel, he

still is the worker. It is a divine operation of God's Holy Spirit. If God would raise up Heathen Princes with the spirit of Peter the Great or Kouli Khan, and send them forth under the powerful influence of Christianity to proselyte their subjects, we might expect the end to be accomplished: but this is a scheme suited to our littleness, and not to Him, *whose thoughts are not as our thoughts, and whose ways are not as our ways.*

A LADY proposed to me a case, which seemed to her to decide against those views of religion called evangelical. She knew a most amiable girl, who was respectful and attentive to her parents, and engaging and lovely to all connected with her: who had, however, no objection to seeing a play; and had certainly nothing of that, which she knew I should call religion: but she asked if I could believe that God would condemn such a character to everlasting misery. Many persons view things in this way. They set themselves up to dictate to God what should be done, on points which he only can determine. If these persons are ever cured of this evil, it must probably be in some such way as that by which it pleased God to teach Job. Job could assert his integrity and his character against the arguments of his friends; but, when God asked *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundation of the earth?* Job prostrates his soul with this declaration—*I have heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

EVERY thinking man will look round him, when he reflects on his situation in this world; and will ask, "What will meet my case? What is it that I want? What will satisfy me? I look at the RICH—and I see Ahab, in the midst of all his riches, sick at heart for a

garden of herbs! I see Dives, after all his wealth, lifting up his eyes in hell, and begging for a drop of water to cool the rage of his sufferings! I see the Rich Fool summoned away, in the very moment when he was exulting in his hoards! If I look at the WISE—I see Solomon, with all his wisdom, acting like a fool; and I know, that, if I possessed all his wisdom, were I left to myself I should act as he did. I see Ahithophel, with all his policy, hanging himself for vexation! If I turn to men of PLEASURE—I see that the very sum of all pleasure is, that it is Satan's bed into which he casts his slaves! I see Esau selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage! I see Solomon, after all his enjoyments, leaving his name a scandal to the Church to the latest age! If I think of HONOUR—take a walk in Westminster Abbey—there is an end to all inquiry. There I walk among the mighty dead! There is the winding up of human glory! And what remains of the greatest men of my country?—A boasting epitaph! None of these things, then, can satisfy me! I must meet death —I must meet judgment—I must meet God—I must meet Eternity!

ON THE

OCCASIONS OF ENMITY

AGAINST CHRISTIANITY.

THE *cause* of enmity against real Christianity is in the heart. The angel Gabriel might exhibit the truth, but the heart would rise in enmity. To suppose that there is any way of preaching the Cross so as not to offend the world, is to know nothing of the subject.

There are many *occasions*, however, of calling forth this enmity. Any man, who should bleed me, would put me to pain; but he would greatly aggravate my pain, if he rudely tore my skin. Occasions may render the reception of that truth morally impossible, which, under the most favourable circumstances, is received with difficulty.

IGNORANCE, in Ministers, is an occasion of exciting enmity against Christianity. A man may betray ignorance on almost every subject, except the way of salvation. But if others see him to be a fool off his own ground, they will think him a fool on that ground. It is a great error to rail against Human Learning, so as to imply an undervaluing of Knowledge. A man may have little of what is called learning, but he must have knowledge. Bunyan was such a man.

Religious profession was, at first, a CONFLICT—a SACRIFICE: now it is become a TRADE. The world sees this spirit pervade many men: and it is a great occasion of enmity. Men of learning and character have confirmed this impression: they have brought

out this mischief, and exhibited it to the world. Let any man look into Warburton's "Doctrine of Grace," and he may sit down and wonder that God should suffer such occasions of enmity to arise.

FANATICAL TIMES furnish another occasion. The days of Cromwell, for instance. The great enemy of godliness will never want instruments to make the best of such subjects of ridicule. As long as such a book as Butler's Hudibras is in the world, it will supply occasions of enmity against real religion.

AN UNHOLY, INSOLENT PROFESSOR OF RELIGION occasions enmity. He scorns and insults mankind. His spirit is such as to give them occasion of contemning the truth which he professes. The world will allow some men to call it to account: they will feel a weight of character in a holy and just man.

ECCENTRICITY, in religious men, is another occasion of enmity. Ask an eccentric man a question: he will stare in your face and look very spiritual. I knew one of these men who called out to a farmer as he was passing, "Farmer! what do you know of Jesus Christ?" Much spiritual pride lurks under this conduct. There is want of breeding and goodsense. The world is led to form wrong associations by such characters: "Religion makes a man a fool, or mad: therefore I will not become religious."

INJUDICIOUS PREACHING increases the offence of the Cross. Strange interpretations of Scripture—ludicrous comparisons—silly stories—talking without thinking:—these are occasions of enmity.

The LOOSE AND INDISCREET CONDUCT of Professing Christians, particularly of Ministers, is another occasion. The world looks at ministers, out of the pulpit, to know what they mean when in it.

AN OSTENTATIOUS SPIRIT in a professor of religion does great injury—that *giving out that he is some great one*. Even a child will often detect this spirit, when we think no one discovers it.

The MANNER OF CONDUCTING THE DEVOTIONAL PART OF PUBLIC SERVICE is sometimes offensive. It is as much as to say, "We *mean* nothing *by this service**. Have patience, and you shall hear me!"

SLIGHTING THE OFFENCE OF IRREGULARITY has done much harm. It was a wise reply of a Spanish Minister to his King; "Omit this affair: it is but a Ceremony!"—"A Ceremony! Why the King is a Ceremony!"

Good men have given occasion of offence by MAINTAINING SUSPICIOUS CONNECTIONS. There is a wide difference between my not harassing and exposing a doubtful character, and my endorsing and authenticating him.

CONTEMPT OF MEN'S PREJUDICES OF EDUCATION will offend. It was not thus with St. Paul: *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*

A WANT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE CROSS IN ITS PROFESSORS increases the offence of the cross—that humility, patience, and love to souls, which animated Christ when he offered himself on the Cross for the sins of the world.

These are some of the stumbling-blocks in the way of the world. And *wo unto the world*, says our Lord, *because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come, but wo unto him by whom the offence cometh!* Every man, who is zealous for the diffusion of true religion, should keep his eye on all occasions of offence, since religion, of itself and in its own native beauty, has to encounter the natural enmity of the degenerate heart.

* Exod. xii, 26.

ON

RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT.

It is difficult to speak on the subject of RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT. I am fully persuaded that most religious tradesmen are defective in this duty, those especially in this great city. I tell every one of them so with whom I am intimately acquainted, and they all contest the point with me.

Yet there are some considerations, which, in my own private judgment concerning the thing, lead me to think that the religion of a great city is to be viewed in an aspect of its own. I say not this to those men whom I see endangered by the spirit of such a place. Give them an inch, and they will take an ell. But I learn from it to aim at possibilities, and not to bend the bow till it breaks.

I say, every where and to all—"You must hold intercourse with God, or your soul will die. You must walk with God, or Satan will walk with you. You must *grow in grace*, or you will lose it: and you cannot do this, but by appropriating to this object a due portion of your time, and diligently employing suitable means." But, having said this, I leave it. I cannot limit and define to such men the exact way in which they must apply these principles, but the principles themselves I insist on. What I ought to do myself under my circumstances, I know; and what I ought to do were I in trade, I seem now to know: but what I really should do were I in trade, I know not; and, because I know it not, I am afraid, in telling another man precisely how he ought to apply this principle.

that I should act hypocritically and pharisaically. Stated seasons of retirement ought to be appointed and religiously observed, but the time and the measure of this retirement must be left to a man's own judgment and conscience.

I am restrained from dogmatizing on this subject, by reflecting on the sort of religion which seems in fact to be best suited to human nature itself; and especially to human nature harassed, worried, loaded, and urged as it is in this great city.

But I am restrained also by another consideration. —Difference of character seems to stamp a holy variety on the operation of religious principle. Some men live in a spirit of prayer, who are scarcely able to fix themselves steadily to the solemn act of prayer. Our characters are so much our own, that if a man were to come into my family in order to form himself on my model, and to imitate me for a month, it might seriously injure him. I have a favourite walk of twenty steps in my study and chamber: that walk is my oratory: but if another man were obliged to walk as he prayed, it is very probable he could not pray at all.

In defining the operation of religious principle, I am afraid of becoming an Albert Durer. Albert Durer gave rules for forming the perfect figure of a man. He marked and defined all the relations and proportions. Albert Durer's man became the model of perfection in every Academy in Europe; and now every Academy in Europe has abandoned it, because no such figure was ever found in nature. I am afraid of reducing the variety, which, to a certain degree, may be of God's own forming, to my notion of perfection. "You must maintain and cultivate a spirit of devotion"—I say to all: "but be ye judges, as conscientious men, of the particular means suited to your circumstances."

The SPIRIT of devotion should be our great aim. We are, indeed, buried in sense, and cannot possibly attain or improve this spirit, but by proper means; yet these means are to be adapted and varied to character and situation.

"I MUST walk with God. In some way or other, whatever be my character or profession, I MUST acquire the holy habit of connecting every thing that passes in my house and affairs, with God. If sickness or health visit my family, my eye must see and my heart must acknowledge the hand of God therein. Whether my affairs move on smoothly or ruggedly, God must be acknowledged in them. If I go out of my house or come into it, I must go out and come in as under the eye of God. If I am occupied in business all day long, I must still have the glory of God in my view. If I have any affair to transact with another, I must pray that God would be with us in that affair, lest we should blunder, and injure and ruin each other."—

This is the language of a real Christian. But, instead of such a spirit as this among the great body of tradesmen professing themselves religious—what do we see but a driving, impetuous pursuit of the world! —and, in this pursuit, not seldom—mean, low, suspicious, yea immoral practices!

Yet I once went to a friend for the express purpose of calling him out into the world. I said to him—"It is your duty to accept the loan of ten thousand pounds, and to push yourself forward into an ampler sphere." But he was a rare character: and his case was rare. His employers had said, "We are ashamed you should remain so long a servant in our house, with the whole weight of affairs on you. We wish you to enter as a principal with us, and will advance you ten thousand pounds. It is the custom of the city—it is your due —we are dissatisfied to see you in your present

sphere." I assured him that it appeared to me to be his duty to accede to the proposal. But I did not prevail. He said—"Sir I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to get to heaven. I have often heard from you that it is no easy thing to master the world. I have every thing I wish. More would encumber me—increase my difficulties—and endanger me."

Solitude shows us what we should be: Society shows us what we are. Yet, in the theory, Solitude shows us our true character better than Society. A man in his closet will find Nature putting herself forth in actings, which the presence of others would restrain him from bringing into real effect. She schemes and she wishes, here, without reserve. She is pure nature. An enlightened and vigilant self-observer is suprised and alarmed. He puts himself on his guard. He goes forth armed into the world. But Society shows him that nature is practically evil. The circumstances of the day as they arise carry him away. If he could abstract himself, and follow the actings of his own mind with an impartial eye, he could not believe himself to be the man who had entered into the world with such holy resolutions.

Recollection is the life of Religion. The Christian wants to know no new thing, but to have his heart elevated more above the world by secluding himself from it as much as his duties will allow, that Religion may effect this its great end by bringing its sublime hopes and prospects into more steady action on the mind.

I know not how it is, that some Christians can make so little of Recollection and Retirement. I find the

spirit of the world a strong assimilating principle. I find it hurrying my mind away in its vortex, and sinking me among the dregs and filth of a carnal nature. Even my ministerial employments would degenerate into a mere following of my trade and crying of my wares. I am obliged to withdraw myself regularly, and to say to my heart, "What are you doing?—Where are you?"

ON

A SPIRITUAL MIND.

Dr. Owen says, if a man of a carnal mind is brought into a large company, he will have much to do: if into a company of Christians, he will feel little interest: if into a smaller company engaged in religious exercises, he will feel still less: but if taken into a closet and forced to meditate on God and Eternity, this will be insupportable!

The spiritual man is born, as it were, into a new world. He has a new taste. He *savours the things of the Spirit.* He turns to God, as the needle to the pole.

This is a subject of which many can understand but little. They want spiritual taste. Nay they account it enthusiasm. Bishop Horsley will go all the way with Christians into their principles: but he thinks the feelings and desires of a spiritual mind enthusiastical.

There are various CHARACTERISTICS of a spiritual mind.

Self-loathing is a characteristic of such a mind. The axe is laid to the root of a vain-glorious spirit.

It maintains, too, a walk and converse with God. *Enoch walked with God.* There is a transaction between God and the spiritual mind: if the man feels dead and heartless, that is matter of complaint to God. He looks to God for wisdom for the day—for the hour—for the business in hand.

A spiritual mind refers its affairs to God. "Let God's will be obeyed by me in this affair! His way may differ from that which I should choose: but let it be so! *Surely, I have behaved and quieted my-*

self as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

A spititual mind has something of the nature of the SENSITIVE-PLANT. "I shall smart if I touch this or that." There is a holy shrinking away from evil.

A spiritual mind enjoys, at times, the INFLUX OF A HOLY JOY AND SATISFACTION, which surprises even itself. When bereaved of creature-comforts, it can sometimes find such a repose in Christ and his promises, that the man can say, "Well! it is enough: let God take from me what else he pleases!"

A spiritual mind is a MORTIFIED mind. The Church of Rome talks much of mortification, but her mortification is not radical and spiritual. Simon Stylites will willingly mortify himself on his pillar, if he can bring people around him to pray to him to pray for them. But the spiritual mind must mortify itself in whatever would retard its ascent toward heaven: it must rise on the wings of faith, and hope, and love.

A spiritual mind is an INGENUOUS mind. There is a sort of hypocrisy in us all. We are not quite stripped of all disguise. One man wraps round him a covering of one kind, and another of another. They, who think they do not this, yet do it though they know it not.

Yet this spiritual mind is a SUBLIME mind. It has a vast and extended view. It has seen the glory and beauty of Christ, and cannot therefore admire the *goodly buildings* of the Temple: as Christ, says Fenelon, had seen his Father's House, and could not therefore be taken with the glory of the earthly structure!

I would urge young persons, when they are staggered by the conversation of people of the world to dwell on the characteristics of a spiritual mind. "If you cannot answer their arguments, yet mark their spirit: and mark what a contrary spirit that is which you are called to cultivate."

There are various MEANS of maintaining and promoting a spiritual mind. Beware of saying con-

cerning this or that evil, *Is it not a little one?* Much depends on mortifying the body. There are silent marches which the flesh will steal on us: the temper is too apt to rise: the tongue will let itself loose: the imagination, if liberty is given to it, will hurry us away. Vain company will injure the mind: carnal professors of religion especially will lower its tone: we catch a contagion from such men. Misemployment of time is injurious to the mind: when reflecting, in illness, on my past years, I have looked back with self-reproach on days spent in my study: I was wading through history, and poetry, and monthly journals; but I was in my study! Another man's trifling is notorious to all observers: but what am I doing? Nothing, perhaps, that has a reference to the spiritual good of my congregation! I do not speak against a chastised attention to literature, but the abuse of it. Avoid all idleness: *Exercise thyself unto godliness:* plan for God. Beware of temptation: the mind, which has dwelt on sinful objects, will be in darkness for days. Associate with spiritually-minded men: the very sight of a good man, though he says nothing, will refresh the soul. Contemplate Christ: be much in retirement and prayer: study the honour and glory of your Master.

ON

DECLENSION IN RELIGION.

A Christian may decline far in religion, without being suspected. He may maintain appearances. Every thing seems to others to go on well. He suspects himself; for it requires great labour to maintain appearances; especially in a Minister. Discerning hearers will, however, often detect such declensions. He talks over his old matters. He says his things, but in a cold and unfeeling manner. He is sound, indeed, in doctrine; perhaps more sound than before; for there is a great tendency to soundness of doctrine, when appearances are to be kept up in a declining state of the heart.

Where a man has real grace, it may be part of a dispensation toward him that he is suffered to decline. He walked carelessly. He was left to decline, that he might be brought to feel his need of vigilance. If he is indulging a besetting sin, it may please God to expose him, especially if he is a high-spirited man, that he may hang down his head as long as he lives. He acted thus toward David and Hezekiah. But this is pulling down, in order to build up again.

The CAUSES of a decline in religion should be remarked:—

The world has always much to do in religious declension. A Minister is tempted, perhaps, to sacrifice every thing to a name. If any appetite is suffered to prevail, it will stupify the mind: religion is an abstract and elevated affair: *The way of life is above to the wise, to depart from hell beneath.* Keep-

ING ON GOOD TERMS WITH THOSE WHO RESPECT US, is a snare. A SPECULATIVE TURN OF MIND is a snare: it leads to that *evil heart of unbelief which departs from the Living God.* VAIN CONFIDENCE thinks himself in no danger: he knows the truth: he can dispute for the truth: "What should we fear?" Why, that we have no fear. TRIFLING WITH CONSCIENCE, is a snare: no man indulges himself in any thing which his conscience tells him ought not to be done, but it will at length wear away his spirituality of mind.

The SYMPTOMS of a religious decline are many:

When a Minister begins to depart from God and to lose a spiritual mind HE BECOMES FOND SOMETIMES OF GENTEEL COMPANY, who can entertain him, and who know how to respect his character! This genteel spirit is suspicious: it is associated with pride, and delicacy, and a love of ease: in short, it is the spirit of the world. It is the reverse of condescending to mean things: it is the reverse of the spirit of our Master.

It is a symptom of decline, when a man will UNNECESSARILY EXPOSE THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THE RELIGIOUS WORLD. "Such a man," he will say, "is fond of praying: but he is fond of money." This is the very opposite spirit to that of St. Paul, who speaks *even weeping* of those who *mind earthly things.*

A VIOLENT SECTARIAN SPIRIT is a sign of religious declension. Honest men stand firm for the vitals of religion. If the mind were right, the circumstantials of religion would not be made matters of fierce contention. The spirit of St. Paul was of another kind. *If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth lest I make my brother to offend—One believeth that he may eat all things: another who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him, that eateth, despise him that eateth not: and let not him, which eateth not, judge him that eateth.*

AVERSION FROM REPROOF marks a state of religious decline. The man cannot bear to have his state de-

picted, even in the pulpit. He calls the preaching which searches and detects him, Arminian and legal. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* Why should he quarrel with the truth? If that truth is delivered in its just proportions, his quarrel is with God!

STUPIDITY UNDER CHASTISEMENT proves a man to be under declension. He is not disposed to ask, *Wherefore dost thou contend with me?* He is *kicking against the pricks.* He is *stricken, but has not grieved.* He is *chastised as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.*

Such a man, too, has often a HIGH MIND. He is unhumbled—boasting—stout-hearted. He is ready to censure every one but himself.

UNNECESSARY OCCUPATION is another evidence of declension. Some men are unavoidably much engaged in the world: to such men God will give especial grace, if they seek it; and they shall maintain a spirit of devotion even in the bustle and occupation of their affairs. But some men *will be rich*, and therefore *fall into temptation and a snare*: they will have shops in different parts of the town; they say they do not feel this affect their religious state: but I cannot believe them: a man is declined from God before he enters on such schemes: a spiritual and devout man will generally find the business in which he is already engaged a sufficient snare.

In short, the Symptoms may be this or that, but the disease is a dead palsy. *Ephraim!—he hath mixed himself among the people: Ephraim is a cake not turned. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not.*

ON A

CHRISTIAN'S

ASSOCIATING WITH IRRELIGIOUS PERSONS FOR THEIR GOOD.

CHRIST is an example to us of entering into mixed society. But our imitation of him herein must admit of restrictions. A feeble man must avoid danger. If any one could go into society as Christ did, then let him go: let him attend marriage-feasts and Pharisees' houses.

Much depends on a Christian's observing his call—the openings which Providence has made before him. It is not enough to say that he frequents public company in order to retard the progress of evil.

But, when in company of people of the world, we should treat them kindly and tenderly—with feeling and compassion. They should be assisted, if they are inclined to receive assistance. But if a Christian falls into the society of a mere worldling, it must be like the meeting of two persons in rain—they will part as soon as possible. If a man loves such company, it is an evil symptom.

It is a Christian's duty to maintain a kind intercourse, if practicable, with his relatives. And he must DULY APPRECIATE THEIR STATE: if not religious, they cannot see and feel and taste his enjoyments: they accommodate themselves to him, and he accommodates himself to them. It is much a matter of accommodation on both sides.

AVOID DISGUSTING SUCH FRIENDS UNNECESSARILY. A precise man, for instance, must be humoured. Your friends set down your religion, perhaps, as a case of humour.

Cultivate good sense. If your friends perceive you weak in any part of your views and conduct, they will think you weak in your religion.

Avoid vain jangling. There is a disposition in such friends to avoid important and pinching truth. If you will converse with them on the subject of religion, they will often endeavour to draw you on to such points as predestination. They will ask you what you think of the salvation of infants and of the heathen. All this is meant to throw out the great question.

Seize favourable occasions—not only the "*mollia tempora fandi*;" but when public characters and public events furnish occasions of profitable reflection.

Bring before your friends the extreme childishness of a sinful state. Treat worldly amusements as puerile things. People of the world are sick at heart of their very pleasures.

ON THE

CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

It belongs to our very relation to God, to set apart a portion of our time for his service: but, as it might have been difficult for conscience to determine what that portion should be, God has prescribed it: and the ground of the observance remains the same, whether the remembrance of God's resting from his work, or any other reason, be assigned as the more immediate cause.

The Jewish Sabbath was partly of political institution, and partly of moral obligation. So far as it was a political appointment, designed to preserve the Jews distinct from other nations, it is abrogated: so far as it was of moral obligation, it remains in force.

Our Lord evidently designed to relax the strictness of the observance. Christianity is not a hedge placed round a peculiar people. A slave might enter into the spirit of Christianity, though obliged to work as a slave on the Sabbath: he might be *in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*, though in the mines of Patmos.

Difficulties often arise in respect to the observance of the Sabbath. I tell conscientious persons, "If you have the spirit of Christianity, and are in an employment contrary to Christianity, you will labour to escape from it, and God will open your way." If such a man's heart be right, he will not throw himself out of his employment the first day he suspects himself to be wrong, but he will pray and wait till his way shall be opened before him.

Christ came not to abolish the Sabbath, but to ex-

plain and enforce it, as he did the rest of the Law. Its observance was nowhere positively enjoined by him, because Christianity was to be practicable, and was to go into all nations: and it goes thither stripped of its precise and various circumstances. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day*, seems to be the soul of the Christian Sabbath.

In this view of the day, a thousand frivolous questions concerning its observance would be answered. "What CAN I do?" says one: I answer, "Do what true servants of God WILL do. Bend not to what is wrong. Be *in the Spirit*. God will help you."

In short, we are going to spend a Sabbath in Eternity. The Christian will acquire as much of the Sabbath spirit as he can. And, in proportion to a man's real piety in every age of the Church, he will be found to have been a diligent observer of the Sabbath-Day.

ON

JUDGING JUSTLY.

A PERFECTLY just and sound mind is a rare and invaluable gift. But it is still much more unusual to see such a mind unbiassed in all its actings. God has given this soundness of mind but to few; and a very small number of those few escape the bias of some predilection, perhaps habitually operating; and none are, at all times and perfectly, free. I once saw this subject forcibly illustrated. A watch-maker told me that a gentleman had put an exquisite watch into his hands, that went irregularly. It was as perfect a piece of work as was ever made. He took it to pieces and put it together again twenty times. No manner of defect was to be discovered, and yet the watch went intolerably. At last it struck him, that, possibly, the balance-wheel might have been near a magnet. On applying a needle to it, he found his suspicion true. Here was all the mischief. The steel work in the other parts of the watch had a perpetual influence on its motions; and the watch went as well as possible with a new wheel. If the soundest mind be MAGNETIZED by any predilection, it must act irregularly.

PREJUDICE is often the result of such strong associations, that it acts involuntarily, in spite of conviction and resolution. The first step toward its eradication, is the persevering habit of presenting it to the mind in its true colours.

If a man will look at most of his prejudices, he will find that they arise from his field of view being necessarily narrow, like the eye of the fly. He can have but little better notions of the whole scheme of things, as has been well said, than a fly on the pavement of St. Paul's Cathedral can have of the whole structure. He is offended, therefore, by inequalities, which are lost in the grand design. This persuasion will fortify him against many injurious and troublesome prejudices.

Just judgment depends on the simplicity and the strength of the mind. The eye which conveys a perfect idea of the scene to the mind, must be unclouded and strong. If the mental eye be not single, the judgment will be warped by some little, mean, and selfish interests; and, if it be not capable of a wide and distant range, the decision will be partial and imperfect. For example: a man, with either of these failings, will be likely to blind his eyes from the conviction, that would dart on him, when he places a son or a friend in any sphere of influence, BECAUSE he is his son or his friend; when a single or a strong eye would show him, that the interests of Religion and Truth required him to prefer some other person. The mind must be raised above the petty interests and affairs of life, and pursue supremely the glory of God and the Church.

Some minds are so diseased, that they can see an affair only in that light, in which passion or predilection first presented it, or as it appears on the surface. The essence, the truth of the thing, which must give character to the whole, and on which all just decision must depend, may lie beneath the surface, and may be a nice affair. But such minds cannot enter into it. It is as though I should try to convince such per-

sons—allowing me that the pineal gland is the seat of the soul—that however fair and perfect the form, the man wanted the essence of his being, in wanting that apparently insignificant part of his body. Such men would say, "Here is a striking and perfect form—all parts are harmonious—life animates the frame—the machine plays admirably—what has this little, insignificant member to do with it?" And yet this is the essential and characterizing part of the man.

Every man has a peculiar turn of mind, which gives a colouring and tinge to his thoughts. I have particularly detected this in myself with respect to public affairs. I have such an immediate view of God acting in them, that all the great men, who make such a noise and bustle on the scene, seem to me like so many mere puppets. God is moving them all, to effect His own designs. They cannot advance a step, whither He does not lead; nor stand a moment, where He does not place them. Now this is a view of things, which it is my privilege to take as a Christian. But the evil lies here. I dwell so much on the view of the matter, to which the turn of my mind leads me, that I forget sometimes the natural tendencies of things. God uses all things, but not so as to destroy their natural tendencies. They are good or evil, according to their own nature; not according to the use which He makes of them.

The mind has a constant tendency to conform itself to the sentiments and cast of thinking with which it is chiefly conversant, either among books or men. If the influence remain undetected, it grows soon into an inveterate habit of obliquity. Even if it be detected, it is the most difficult thing in the world to

bring back the mind to the standard, especially if there be any thing in its constitution which assimilates itself to the error. I was once much in the habit of reading the mystical writers: a book of Dr. Owen's clearly convinced me that they erred: yet I found my mind ever inclining toward them, and winding round like the biassed bowl. I saw clearly the absurdity of the notions in their view of them, and yet I was ever talking of "self-annihilation" &c.—and am not even now rid of the thing.

ON THE

CHARACTER OF ST. PAUL.

I DELIGHT to contemplate St. Paul as an appointed pattern. Men might have questioned the propriety of urging on them the example of Christ: they might have said that we are necessarily in dissimilar circumstances. But St. Paul stands up in like case with ourselves—a model of ministerial virtues.

We consider him, perhaps, in point of character, more the immediate subject of extraordinary inspiration, than he was in reality. And this mistake affects our view of him in two different ways.

We suppose, at one time, that his virtues were so much the effect of extraordinary communications, that he is no proper model for us; whereas he was no farther fitted to his circumstances than every Christian has warrant to expect to be, so far as his circumstances are similar.

At another time, perhaps, though we acknowledge and revere his distinguished character, yet our view of his virtues is exalted beyond due measure. We should remember, that, as he was fitted for his circumstances; so he was, in a great degree, made by them. Many men are, doubtless, executing their appointed task in retirement and silence, who would unfold a character beyond all expectation, if Providence were to lead them into a scene where the world rose up in arms, and they were sent forth into it under a clear conviction of an especial mission. The history of the Church seems to show us that the effects of grace

ordinary or extraordinary, have been the same in all ages.

In speaking of St. Paul, it has been usual to magnify his learning, among the many other great qualities which he possessed. That point seems never to have been satisfactorily made out. He was an educated Pharisee; but, farther than this, I think we cannot go. His quotations from the Greek Poets are not evidences of even a school boy's learning in our day: for we forget, when we talk of them, that he was a Roman quoting Greek. Nor do I see any thing more in his famous speech in the Areopagus, so often produced as evidence on this subject, than the line of argument to which a strong and energetic mind would lead him. If we talk of his talents, indeed, he rises almost beyond admiration; but they were talents of a certain order: and the very display which we have of them seems a strong corroborative proof, that he is not to be considered as a profoundly learned man of his day. For instance, had he studied Aristotle, it would have been almost impossible but he must have caught some influence, which we should have seen in his writings. But there is nothing like the dry, logical metaphysical character of that school; which yet had then given the law to the seats of science and philosophy. Instead of this, we see every where the copious, diffusive, declaiming, discursive; but sublime, and wise, and effective mind.

THERE is a true apostolicism in the character of St. Paul. It is a combination of ZEAL and LOVE.

The zeal of some men is of a haughty, unbending, ferocious character. They have the letter of truth, but they mount the pulpit like prize-fighters. It is with them a perpetual scold. This spirit is a reproach to the Gospel. It is not the spirit of Jesus Christ. HE seems to have laboured to win men.

But there is an opposite extreme. The love of some men is all milk and mildness! There is so much delicacy, and so much fastidiousness! They touch with such tenderness!—and, if the patient shrinks, they will touch no more! The times are too flagrant for such a disposition. The Gospel is sometimes preached in this way, till all the people agree with the preacher. He gives no offence, and he does no good!

But St. Paul united and blended love and zeal. He MUST win souls: but he will labour to do this by all possible lawful contrivances. *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.* Zeal, alone, may degenerate into ferociousness and brutality: and love, alone, into fastidiousness and delicacy: but the Apostle combined both qualities; and, more perfectly than other men, realized the union of the *fortiter in re* with the *suaviter in modo*.

MISCELLANIES.

The Moravians seem to have very nearly hit on Christianity. They appear to have found out what sort of a thing it is—its quietness—meekness—patience—spirituality—heavenliness—and order. But they want fire. A very superior woman among them once said to me—that there wanted another body, the character of which should be combined from the Moravians and the Methodists. The Moravians have failed, in making too little of preaching; as the Methodists have done, in making too much of it.

The grandest operations, both in nature and in grace, are the most silent and imperceptible. The shallow Brook babbles in its passage, and is heard by every one: but the coming on of the Seasons is silent and unseen. The storm rages and alarms; but its fury is soon exhausted, and its effects are partial and soon remedied: but the Dew, though gentle and unheard, is immense in quantity, and the very life of large portions of the earth. And these are pictures of the operations of Grace, in the Church and in the Soul.

Atheism is a characteristic of our day. On the sentiments, manners, pursuits, amusements, and dealings of the great body of mankind, there is written in broad characters—*without God in the world!*

I HAVE often had occasion to observe, that a warm blundering man does more for the world than a frigid wise man. A man, who gets into a habit of inquiring about proprieties and expediencies and occasions, often spends his life without doing any thing to purpose. The state of the world is such, and so much depends on action, that every thing seems to say loudly to every man, "Do something"—"Do it"—"Do it."

PROVIDENCE is a greater mystery than Religion. The state of the world is more humiliating to our reason, than the doctrines of the Gospel. A reflecting Christian sees more to excite his astonishment and to exercise his faith in the state of things between Temple Bar and St. Paul's, than in what he reads from Genesis to Revelation. See the description of the workings of God's Providence, in the account of the Cherubims in the 1st and 10th Chapters of Ezekiel.

THE scheme and machinery of Redemption may be illustrated by the water-works at Marly. We consider a part of that complicated machinery, and we cannot calculate on the effects; but we see that they are produced. We cannot explain to a philosopher the system of Redemption, and the mode of conducting and communicating its benefit to the human soul; but we know that it yields the water of life—Civilization, to a barbarian—Direction, to a wanderer—Support, to those that are ready to perish.

IT is manifest that God designs to promote intercourse and commerce among men, by giving to each climate its appropriate productions. It is, in itself, not only innocent, but laudable. All Trade, however, which

is founded in Embellishment, is founded in Depravity. So also is that Spirit of Trade, which pushes men on dangerous Competitions. Many tradesmen, professedly religious, seem to look on their trade as a vast engine, which will be worked to no good effect, if it be not worked with the whole vigour of the soul. This is an intoxicating and ruinous mistake. So far as they live under the power of religion, they will pursue their trade for sustenance and provision; but not even that, with unseasonable attention and with eagerness: much less will religion suffer them to bury themselves in it, when its objects are something beyond these: and, least of all, will it leave them to deceive themselves with certain commercial maxims, so far removed from simplicity and integrity, that I have been often shocked beyond measure, at hearing them countenanced and adopted by some religious professors.

Every man should aim to do one thing well. If he dissipates his attention on several objects, he may have excellent talents entrusted to him, but they will be entrusted to no good end. Concentrated on his proper object, they might have a vast energy; but, dissipated on several, they will have none. Let other objects be pursued, indeed; but only so far as they may subserve the main purpose. By neglecting this rule, I have seen Frivolity and Futility written on minds of great power; and, by regarding it, I have seen very limited minds acting in the first rank of their profession—I have seen a large capital and a great stock dissipated, and the man reduced to beggary; and I have seen a small capital and stock improved to great riches.

To effect any purpose, in study, the mind must be concentrated. If any other subject plays on the fancy,

than that which ought to be exclusively before it, the mind is divided; and both are neutralized, so as to lose their effect. Just as when I learnt two systems of short-hand. I was familiar with Gurney's method. and wrote it with ease; but, when I took it into my head to learn Byrom's, they destroyed each other. and I could write neither.

THERE should be something obvious, determinate. and positive, in a man's reasons for taking a journey; especially if he be a Minister. Such events and consequences may be connected with it in every step, that he ought, in no case, to be more simply dependent on the great Appointer of means and occasions. Several journeys, which I thought myself called on to take, I have since had reason to think I should not have taken. Negative, and even doubtful reasons, may justify him in choosing the safer side of staying at home; but there ought to be something more in the reasons which put him out of his way, to meet the unknown consequences of a voluntary change of station. Let there always be a "Because" to meet the "Why?"

I SOMETIMES see, as I sit in my pew at St. John's during the Service, an idle fellow saunter into the Chapel. He gapes about him for a few minutes; finds nothing to interest and arrest him; seems scarcely to understand what is going forward; and, after a lounge or two, goes out again. I look at him, and think, "Thou art a wonderful creature! A perfect miracle! What a machine is that body! curiously,—fearfully,—wonderfully framed! An intricate—delicate—but harmonious and perfect structure! And, then, to ascend to thy soul!—its nature—its capacities!—its actual state!—its designation! its eternal condition!—I am

lost in amazement!"—While he seems to have no more consciousness of all this, than the brutes which perish!

Sin, pursued to its tendencies, would pull God from his throne. Though I have a deep conviction of its *exceeding sinfulness*, I live not a week without seeing some exhibition of its malignity which draws from me —"Well! who could have imagined this!" Sin would subjugate heaven, earth, and hell to itself. It would make the Universe the minion of its lusts, and all Beings bow down and worship.

It is one of the most awful points of view in which we can consider God, that, as a righteous Governor of the world, concerned to vindicate his own glory, he has laid himself under a kind of holy necessity to purify the unclean, or to sink him into perdition.

It is one of the curses of Error, that the man, who is the subject of it, if he has had the opportunity of being better informed, cannot possibly do right, so far as he is under it. He has brought himself into an utter incapacity of acting virtuously: since it is vicious to obey an ill-informed conscience, if that conscience might have been better informed; and certainly vicious to disobey conscience, whether it be well or ill-informed.

The approaches of sin are like the conduct of Jael. It *brings butter in a lordly dish*. It bids high for the soul. But, when it has fascinated and lulled the victim, the nail and the hammer are behind.

I HAVE met with one case in my ministry, very frequent and very distressing. A man says to me, "I approve all you say. I SEE things to be just as you state them. I see a necessity, a propriety, a beauty in the religion of Christ. I see it to be interesting and important. But I do not FEEL it. I cannot feel it. I have no spirit of prayer. My heart belies my head: its affections refuse to follow my convictions." If this complaint be ingenuous, it is an evidence of grace; and I say, "Wait for God, and he will appear." But, too often, it is not ingenuous: the heart is actually indisposed: some tyrant holds it in bondage. The complaint is a mockery—because there is no sincerity of endeavour to obtain the object of which it pretends to lament the want—there is no sincere desire and prayer for the quickening and breathing of God's Holy Spirit on the torpid soul.

THE man who labours to *please his neighbour for his good to edification*, has *the mind that was in Christ*. He is a sinner trying to help a sinner. How different the face of things if this spirit prevailed!—if Dissenters were like Henry, and Watts, and Doddridge; and Churchmen like Leighton! The man who comes prominently forward in any way may expect to be found fault with: one will call him harsh, and another a trimmer. A hard man may be reverenced, but men will like him best at a distance: he is an iron man: he is not like Jesus Christ: Christ might have driven Thomas from his presence for his unreasonable incredulity—but not so! It is as though he had said, "I will come down to thy weakness: if thou canst not believe without thrusting thy hand into my side, then thrust in thy hand." Even a feeble, but kind and tender man, will effect more than a genius who is rough or artificial. There is danger, doubtless, of humouring others; and against this we must be on our guard.

It is a kind and accommodating spirit at which we must aim. When the two goats met on the bridge which was too narrow to allow them either to pass each other or to return, the goat which lay down that the other might walk over him was a finer gentleman than Lord Chesterfield.

To expect disease wherever he goes, and to lay himself out in the application of remedies, is that habit of mind, which is best suited to a Christian while he passes through the world, if he would be most effectually useful.

The Papists and Puritans erred, in opposite extremes, in their treatment of mankind. The PAPISTS, almost to a man, considered the mass of men as mere animals, and to be led by the senses. Even Fenelon fell into this way of thinking. Some few fine spirits were to be found, which were capable of other treatment; but the herd they thought capable of nothing but seeing and hearing. The PURITANS, on the contrary, treated man as though he had nothing of the animal about him. There was among them a total excision of all amusement and recreation. Every thing was effort. Every thing was severe. I have heard a man of this school preach on the distinction between Justifying and Saving Faith. He tried to make his hearers enter into these niceties: whereas Faith, in its bold and leading features, should have been presented to them, if any effect was expected. The bulk of mankind are capable of much more than the Papist allows, but are incapable of that which the Puritan supposes. They should be treated, in opposition to both, as rational and feeling creatures, but upon a bold and palpable ground.

I HAVE seen such sin in the Church, that I have been often brought by it to a sickly state of mind. But, when I have turned to the world, I have seen sin working there in such measures and forms, that I have turned back again to the Church with more wisdom of mind and more affection to it—tainted as it is. I see sin, however, nowhere put on such an odious appearance, as in the Church. It mixes itself with the most holy things, and debases them, and turns them to its own purposes. It builds its nest in the very pinnacles of the temple. The history of the primitive ages of the Church has also checked the disgust which would arise from seeing the impure state of things before our eyes. Folly and wickedness sported themselves even then, in almost all possible forms. I turn, in such states of mind, to two portraits in my study—John Bradford and Abp. Leighton. These never fail, in such cases, to speak forcibly to my heart, that, in the midst of all there is pure religion, and to tell me what that religion is.

THE Joy of Religion is an Exorcist to the mind. It expels the demons of carnal mirth and madness.

THE union of Christians to Christ, their common head; and, by means of the influence which they derive from Him, one to another; may be illustrated by the Loadstone. It not only attracts the particles of iron to itself, by the magnetic virtue; but, by this virtue, it unites them one among another.

SOME considerable defect is always visible, in the greatest men, to a discerning eye. We idolize the best characters, because we see them partially. Let us acknowledge excellence, and ascribe the glory where it

is due, while we honour the possessor; but let us remember that God has, by leaving his greatest servants to the natural operation of human frailty in some point or other of their character, written on the face of the Christian Church, *Cease ye from man!* He does, by perfection in Character, as he did by the body of Moses—he hides it, that it may not be idolized. Our affections, our prejudices, or our ignorance cover the creature with a dazzling veil: but he lifts it up; and seems to say, "See the creature you admire!"

A man, who thinks himself to have attained Christian Perfection, in the sense in which it has been insisted on by some persons, either deceives himself, by calling Sin, Infirmity—or Satan leaves him undisturbed in false security—or the Demon of Pride overcomes the Demon of Lust.

The trials of the tempted Christian are often sent for the use of others, and are made the riches of all around him.

If I were not penetrated with a conviction of the truth of the Bible, and the reality of my own experience, I should be confounded on all sides—from within, and from without—in the world, and in the church.

If a good man cannot prevent evil, he will hang heavy on its wings, and retard its progress.

We are too much disposed to look at the outside of things. The face of every affair chiefly affects us. Were God to draw aside the veil and to show us but a little of the reality, and the relations of the most ap-

parently mysterious and complicated dispensations we should acquiesce with reverence and admiration. A Minister, for example, may be taken away in the beginning of a promising career, or in the midst of great usefulness. If we cannot perceive any direct reason for this Providence, we stand amazed. But, if we could look forward into the farther life of such men, we should probably see that they were taken away in mercy to themselves—to the church—or to the world.

I HAVE seen too much of life, to have any thing to do in the troubled waters of my friends, by way of giving advice; unless they will allow me to remain in secret. This especially applies to some Christians of more sincerity than prudence. An opinion given on difficult and controverted cases, in confidence of its being used only as a private principle of action, has been quoted as authority in defence of the conduct founded on it.

MANY duties are involved in the very nature of religion, concerning which there is perhaps not one express precept to be found in the Scriptures. Private, family, or public devotions are nowhere enjoined; as to the time, or frequency, or manner of performing them. Yet they are so strongly implied in the very nature of religion, and they are supposed so necessarily to flow from the divine principle of spiritual life in the soul, that those men greatly err, who think themselves not obliged by their religion to the most diligent use of them that circumstances will allow. And, surely, we may trace here the footsteps of Divine Wisdom. If it had been said, "Thou shalt do this or that, at such and such times," this would have brought a yoke on the neck of the Christian; and,

even when absolutely unavoidable circumstances prevented him from complying with the injunction, would have left sin on his conscience. While the way in which the duty is enforced leaves him a Christian liberty, that is abundantly guarded against all licentiousness. He sees the duty implied and exemplified in a thousand instances throughout the Scripture. The same principle is applicable to certain pursuits, which occupy the men of the world; the general unlawfulness of which is fully implied, though they neither are nor could have been forbidden by name.*

Nothing seems important to me but so far as it is connected with morals. The end—the cui bono? enters into my view of every thing. Even the highest acts of the intellect become criminal trifling, when they occupy much of the time of a moral creature, and especially of a Minister. If the mind cannot feel and treat mathematics and music and every thing else as a trifle, it has been seduced and enslaved. Brainerd, and Grimshaw, and Fletcher were men. Most of us are dwarfs.

In imitating examples, there are two rules to be regarded: We must not stretch ours beyond our measure: nor must we despise that in another, which is unsuitable to ourselves.

A piece has been written to prove that the Gospel is preached to Sinners, only in the lowest state of misery and imbecility. Some men get hold of an opinion, and push it so far that it meets and contradicts other opinions, fairly deducible from Scripture. And it is

* See this idea illustrated with regard to Articles of Faith in Jones' "Short view of the argument between the Church of England and Dissenters," in the "Scholar Armed," vol. ii, p. 59. J. P.

no uncommon thing with them to suppose, that nobody else holds the same opinion: when, if they would look into the minds of other men, they would find themselves deceived. We preach the Gospel to sinners in the lowest condition: and the only reason I do not preach it to Devils, is, that I find no Gospel provided for Devils. As to the Roman Catholic notion of a grace of congruity, in their sense of it I utterly disclaim it. Some of the best of them taught that God prepared the heart for himself in various unseen ways. And who can deny this? but this is far different from the notion, that some minds have a natural congruity or suitableness to the Gospel. The fallow-ground of the heart may be broken up, ploughed, and prepared by unseen and most circuitous means. I have gone from hearing a man preach incomparable nonsense who knew spiritual religion, to hearing a man of a carnal mind and habits who knew nothing of spiritual religion preach incomparable sense, and I thought the carnal preacher much most likely to call men to some feeling of religion.

The Imagination is the grand organ, whereby Truth can make successful approaches to the mind. Some preachers deal much with the passions: they attack the hopes and fears of men. But this is a very different thing from the right use of the Imagination, as the medium of impressing Truth. Jesus Christ has left perfect patterns of this way of managing men. But it is a distinct talent, and a talent committed to very few. It is an easy thing to move the passions: a rude, blunt, illiterate attack may do this. But, to form one new figure for the conveyance of Truth to the mind, is a difficult thing. The world is under no small obligation to the man who forms such a figure. The French strain this point so far, that the effort is continually seen. To be effective—there must be

about it a *naivetè*—an ease—a self-evidence. The figures of the French writers vanish from the mind, like the flourish of a musical band. The figures of Jesus Christ sink into the mind, and leave there the indelible impress of the Truth which they convey.

The religious world has a great momentum. Money and power, in almost any quantity, are brought forth into action, when any fair object is set before it. It is a pendulum, that swings with prodigious force. But it wants a regulator. If there is no regulating force on it, of sufficient power, its motions will be so violent and eccentric, that it will tear the machine to pieces. And, therefore, when I have any influence in its designs and schemes, I cannot help watching them with extreme jealousy, to throw in every directing and regulating power which can be obtained from any quarter.

Nothing can be proposed so wild or so absurd, as not to find a party—and often a very large party—ready to espouse it. It is a sad reflection on human nature, but it is too true. Every day's experience and history confirm it. It would have argued gross ignorance of mankind to expect even Swedenborgianism to be rejected at once by the common sense of men. He, who laid the snare, knew that if a few characters of some learning and respectability could be brought to espouse it, there would be soon a silly multitude ready to follow.

The religious world has many features, which are distressing to a holy man. He sees in it much proposal and ostentation, covering much surface. But Christianity is deep and substantial. A man is soon

enlisted; but he is not soon made a Soldier. He is easily put into the ranks, to make a show there; but he is not so easily brought to do the duties of the ranks. We are too much like an army of Asiatics; they count well, and cut a good figure; but, when they come into action, one has no flint, another has no cartridge—the arms of one are rusty, and another has not learnt to handle them. This was not the complaint equally at all times. It belongs too peculiarly to the present day. The fault lies in the muster. We are like Falstaff. He took the King's money to press good men and true, but got together such ragamuffins that he was ashamed to muster them. What is the consequence! People groan under their connections. Respectable persons tell me such stories of their servants, who profess religion, as to shame and distress me. High pretensions to spirituality! Warm zeal for certain sentiments! Priding themselves in Mr. Such-a-one's ministry! But what becomes of their duties?—Oh these are "beggarly elements" indeed! Such persons are alive to religious TALK: but if you speak to them on religious TEMPERS, the subject grows irksome.

ADMIRATION and Feeling are very distinct from each other. Some music and oratory enchant and astonish, but they speak not to the heart. I have been overwhelmed by Handel's music: the Dettingen Te Deum is, perhaps, the greatest composition in the world: yet I never in my life heard Handel, but I could think of something else at the same time. There is a kind of music that will not allow this. Dr. Worgan has so touched the organ at St. John's, that I have been turning backward and forward over the Prayer Book for the First Lesson in Isaiah, and wondered that I could not find Isaiah there! The musician and the orator fall short of the full power of their science, if the hearer is left in possession of himself.

The Church of England is not fitted, in its present state, for a General Church. Its secularity must be purged away. We shall hasten that day when Christians shall be of one heart and one mind, if we inculcate the spirit of charity on our respective circles. I have aimed much at this point, and shall push it farther. The rest must be left to Providence. He only can, by unknown means, heal the schisms of the Church, and unite it together as one external body: and that this will be done, as some think, by persecution, appears highly probable. I see no other means adequate to the end.

Hypocrisy is folly. It is much easier, safer, and pleasanter to be the thing which a man aims to appear, than to keep up the appearance of being what he is not. When a Christian is truly such, he acts from a nature—a new nature—and all the actings of that nature have the ease and pleasantness of nature in them.

Humiliation is the spirit of our dispensation—not a creeping, servile, canting humility: but an entire self-renunciation. The Mystics often talk admirably on this subject. Pride is the most universal and inveterate of all vices. Every man is a proud man, though all are not equally proud. No sin harasses the Christian so much, nor accompanies him so unweariedly. Its forms of exhibiting itself are infinitely varied, and none are more common than the affectation of humility. The assumption of the garb of humility, in all its shades, is generally but an expression of a proud mind. Pride is the master-sin of the spirit; and the grace of God, in the whole tenor of our dispensation, is directed against it.

I EXTEND the circle of real religion very widely. Many men fear God, and love God, and have a sincere desire to serve Him, whose views of religious truth are very imperfect, and in some points perhaps utterly false. But I doubt not that many such persons have a state of heart acceptable before God.

MAN is a creature of extremes. The middle path is generally the wise path: but there are few wise enough to find it. Because Papists have made too much of some things, Protestants have made too little of them. The Papists treat man as all sense: and, therefore, some Protestants would treat him as all spirit. Because one party has exalted the Virgin Mary to a divinity, the other can scarcely think of that *most highly favoured among women* with common respect. The Papist puts the Apocrypha into his canon—the Protestant will scarcely regard it as an ancient record. Popish heresy of human merit in Justification, drove Luther on the other side into most unwarrantable and unscriptural statements of that doctrine. The Papists consider Grace as inseparable from the participation of the Sacraments—the Protestants too often lose sight of them as instituted Means of conveying Grace.

THE language of Irreligion in the heart, is, "Give—give—now—now—whatever the flesh and the eye lust after, and whatever gratifies the pride of life. Give it now—for, as to any Reversion, I will not sacrifice a single lust for it; or, if I must have a religion, it shall be any thing rather than that demeaning system, which makes every thing a mere boon."

INSTEAD of attempting any logical and metaphysical explanation of JUSTIFICATION by the imputed right-

eousness of Christ, all which attempts have human infirmity stamped upon them. I would look at the subject in the great and impressive light in which Scripture places it before me. It teaches me to regard the intervention of Christ for me, as the sole ground of all expectation toward God. In consideration of his sufferings, my guilt is remitted, and I am restored to that which I had lost by sin. Let us add to this, that the sufferings of Christ were in our stead, and we shall see the point of view in which Scripture sets him forth as the deserver and procurer to us of all pardon and grace. The thing is declared—not explained. Let us not therefore darken a subject which is held forth in a prominent light, by our idle endeavours to make it better understood.

REGENERATION and CONVERSION may be distinguished from each other, though they cannot be separated. They may be distinguished; as a man's being disposed to go in a certain road, and his actually going in that road, may be distinguished: for Regeneration is God's disposing the heart to himself; but Conversion is the actual turning of the heart to God.

THERE is an immeasurable distance between the genuine and the spurious Christian. The Genuine Christian may be weak, wild, eccentric, fanatical, faulty; but he is right-hearted: you find *the root of the matter* in him. The Spurious Christian is the most dangerous of men, and one of the most difficult to deal with. You see what he is, but you find it almost impossible to keep clear of him. He will seek your acquaintance, in order to authenticate his own character—to endorse his own reputation. But avoid him. His errors and vices will be assigned to the Church, by an indiscriminating world. There is

less danger in associating with worldly people by profession, and more tenderness to be exercised toward them. St. Paul teaches us the distinction, 1 Cor. v, 9—11.

I FEEL disposed to treat carnal men and carnal ministers with tenderness, not to show them that I am a spiritually proud man. Let them see that you have some secret in possession, which keeps you quiet, humble, patient, holy, meek, and affectionate, in a turbulent and passionate world.

THE character of Balaam is not uncommon in the Church. I have been amazed to see religious professors, whose ungodly character has been known and read of all men, who have nevertheless entertained a good opinion of themselves. I have accounted for it, by supposing that they build entirely on the distinction of their views of truth from those of other men. They "know the points: they see the distinctions: and, moreover, they approve what they know and desire to die the death of the righteous and be where they are—and, certainly, they must be the men of God's council, and the men who stand on His side against the world!"

I HAVE long adopted an expedient, which I have found of singular service. I have a shelf in my study, for tried authors; and one in my mind, for tried principles and characters.

When an AUTHOR has stood a thorough examination, and will bear to be taken as a guide, I put him on the shelf!

When I have more fully made up my mind on a PRINCIPLE, I put it on the shelf! A hundred subtle

objections may be brought against this principle: I may meet with some of them, perhaps: but my principle is on the shelf! Generally, I may be able to recall the reasons which weighed with me to put it there; but, if not, I am not to be sent out to sea again. Time was, when I saw through and detected all the subtleties that could be brought against it. I have past evidence of having been fully convinced: and there on the shelf it shall lie!

When I have turned a CHARACTER over and over on all sides, and seen it through and through in all situations, I put it on the shelf. There may be conduct in the person, which may stumble others; there may be great inconsistencies: there may be strange and unaccountable turns—but I have put that character on the shelf: difficulties will all be cleared up: every thing will come round again. I should be much chagrined, indeed, to be obliged to take a character down, which I had once put up: but that has never been the case with me yet; and the best guard against it, is—not to be too hasty in putting them there.

INFLUENCE, whether derived from money, talents, or connections, is Power: there is no person so insignificant, but he has much of this power: the little Israelite maid, in Naaman's family, is an instance: some, indeed, suppose that they have more power than they really have; but we generally think we have less than we in reality have. Whoever neglects or misapplies this power, is an unprofitable servant: unbelief, timidity, and delicacy often cramp its exertion; but it is our duty to call ourselves out to the exertion of this power, as Mordecai called out Esther, (ch. iv): it is our duty to watch against every thing that might hinder or pervert our influence; for mere regard to reputation will often carry many into error: who would not follow Aaron in worshipping the Golden Calf? Even

men of feeble public talents may acquire much influence by kindness and consistency of character: Ministers are defective in resting their personal influence too much on their public ministry: time will give weight to a man's character; and it is one advantage to a man to be cast early into his situation, that he may earn a character.

The instances of ARTIFICE which occur in Scripture are not to be imitated, but avoided: if Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob equivocate in order to obtain their ends, this is no warrant to me to do so: David's falsehood concerning Goliath's sword argued distrust of God. If any part of the truth which I am bound to communicate be concealed, this is sinful artifice: the Jesuits in China, in order to remove the offence of the Cross, declared that it was a falsehood invented by the Jews that Christ was crucified; but they were expelled from the empire: and this was designed, perhaps, to be held up as a warning to all Missionaries, that no good end is to be carried by artifice.

But ADDRESS is of a different nature. There is no falsehood, deception, or equivocation in Address. St. Paul, for instance, employed lawful Address, and not Artifice, when he set the Sadducees and Pharisees at variance: he employed a lawful argument to interest the Pharisees in his favour: this was great address, but it had nothing of criminal artifice. In Joshua's ambushes for the men of Ai there was nothing sinful: it was a lawful stratagem of war: it would have been unlawful to tell the men Ai there was no ambush; but they knew that they came out of their city liable to such ambushes. Christ's conduct at Emmaus, and that of the Angels at Sodom, were meant as trials of the regard of those with whom they were conversing.

PRECIPITATION is acting without sufficient grounds of action. Youth is the peculiar season of Precipitation: the young man's motto is, "Onward!" There is no such effectual cure of this evil, as experience; when a man is made to feel the effects of his precipitation, both in body and mind: and God alone can thus bring a man acquainted with himself. There is a self-blindness in precipitation: a precipitate man is, at the time, a blind man: *That be far from thee!* said St. Peter: *this shall not happen to thee: As the Lord liveth*, saith David, *the man that hath done this thing shall surely die!*

There is great criminality in precipitation. A man under its influence is continually tempted to take God's work out of his hands. It is not a state of dependance. It betrays want of patience with respect to God; and want of faith: *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.* It discovers a want of charity: in a rash moment we may do an injury to our neighbour, which we can never repair.

There are few, who do not feel that they are suffering through life the effects of their own precipitation. *He*, then, *that trusteth his own heart, is a fool.* In precipitate moments we should learn to say, "I am not now the man to give an opinion, or to take a single step!"

METHOD, as Mrs. More says, is the very hinge of business; and there is no method without PUNCTUALITY. Punctuality is important, because it subserves the peace and good-temper of a family: the want of it not only infringes on necessary duty, but sometimes excludes this duty. Punctuality is important as it gains time: it is like packing things in a box: a good packer will get in half as much more as a bad one. The calmness of mind which it produces, is another advantage of punctuality: a disorderly man is always in a hurry: he has no time to speak with you, because

he is going elsewhere; and, when he gets there, he is too late for his business, or he must hurry away to another before he can finish it. It was a wise maxim of the Duke of Newcastle—"I do one thing at a time." Punctuality gives weight to character. "Such a man has made an appointment: then I know he will keep it." And this generates punctuality in you: for, like other virtues, it propagates itself: servants and children must be punctual, where their leader is so. Appointments, indeed, become debts: I owe you punctuality, if I have made an appointment with you; and have no right to throw away your time if I do my own.

It is a difficult question in Casuistry—How FAR A MAN IS BOUND TO BETRAY CONFIDENCE FOR GENERAL GOOD. Let it be considered what consequences would follow from a man's disclosing all the evil he knows. The world would become a nest of scorpions. He must often mistake, and of course calumniate. Such is his incapacity to determine what is really evil in his neighbour, and such are the mischiefs frequently arising from the disclosure of even what should be in truth evil, that he seems rather called on to be silent, till circumstances render it a case of duty to remain silent no longer. But, if this be his GENERAL RULE, it will be his duty to observe silence much oftener in cases of CONFIDENCE. Professional Men—a Minister—a Lawyer—a Medical Man—have an official secrecy imposed on them. If this were not the case—a distrest conscience could never unburthen itself to its Confessor. Incalculable injuries to health and property must be sustained, for want of proper advisers. This applies in a very high sense to a Minister, considered as a Confessor—a director of the conscience. An alarmed conscience will unfold its most interior recesses before him. It is said Dr. Owen advised a man, who, under religious convictions con-

fessed to him a murder which he had perpetrated some years before, to surrender himself up to justice. The man did so, and was executed. I think Dr. Owen erred in his advice. I thought myself right, in urging on persons, who have opened their hearts to me, deep humiliation before God for crimes committed in an unconverted state; but, as it had pleased Him to give a thorough hatred of those crimes to the mind, and a consequent self-loathing and humiliation, and yet to allow in His providence that they should have remained undiscovered, I judged that the matter might be safely left with Him. Yet there may be cases, in which general consequences require that confidence should be betrayed. Such cases usually relate to EVIL IN PROGRESS. To prevent or counteract such evil, it may be necessary to disclose what has been entrusted in confidence. Yet the party should be honestly warned, if its purposes are not changed what duty your conscience will require.

I HAVE felt twice in my life very extraordinary impressions under sermons, and that from men least calculated to affect me. A man of great powers, but so dissipated on every thing that he knew nothing—a frivolous, futile babbler, whom I was ready almost to despise—surprised and chained me so, in my own church at Lewes, that I was thunder-struck: I think it was concerning the dove not finding rest for the sole of her foot: he felt the subject strongly himself; and, in spite of all my prejudices against him and my real knowledge of his character, he made me feel it as I have scarcely ever done before or since. In the other instance, I had to do with a very different character: he was a simple, but weak man: it pleased God, however, to shoot an arrow by his hand into my heart: I had been some time in a dry, fruitless frame, and was persuading myself that all was going on well:

he said one day, at Lewes, with an indescribable simplicity, that "Men might cheer themselves in the morning, and they might pass on tolerably well perhaps without God at noon; but the cool of the day was coming, when God would come down to talk with them." It was a message from God to me: I felt as though God had descended into the Church, and was about to call me to my account! In the former instance, I was more surprised and astonished than affected religiously; but, in this, I was unspeakably moved.

CONSTITUTIONAL bias is a suspicious Interpreter of PROVIDENTIAL LEADINGS. A man's besetting sin lies in that to which his nature is most inclined; and, therefore, to walk wisely and holily, he should be very jealous of such supposed leadings in Providence as draw with his constitutional propensity. He is never safe, unless he is in the act of collaring his nature as a rebel, and forcing it into submission. A *sanguine* man sees a sign and token in every thing: in every ordinary occurrence, his imagination hears a call: his pious fancy is the source and food of an eager, disquieted, and restless habit of mind. An *enterprising* man has great facility in finding God in whatever seems to open to honour, or influence, or power. But he has lost the right estimate of things: if God seem to draw with an enterprising mind, the man should stand and tremble. Providence may really lead some retired and humble men into situations which the ambitious man would covet; but, even in that case, it is not to be regarded as an evidence of favour, so much as an increase of trial and responsibility: but He can never open before an enterprising and ambitious character, unless in judgment, or in such imminence of trial as should call the man to self-suspicion and humility. A *pleasurable* man easily discerns God's hand in every thing, which seems

to put his favourite indulgences within his power: such a thing was a great Providence! and he is vastly grateful! while he sees not that he is led away to broken cisterns. An *idle* man has a constant tendency to torpidity. He has adopted the Indian maxim—that it is better to walk than to run, and better to stand than to walk, and better to sit than to stand, and better to lie than to sit. He hugs himself in the notion, that God calls him to be quiet! that he is not made for bustling and noise! that such and such a thing plainly show him he ought to retire and sit still! A *busy* man is never at rest: he sees himself called so often into action, that he digs too much to suffer any thing to grow, and waters so profusely that he drowns. The danger in all these cases is, lest a man should bless himself in his SNARES!

ADAM well observes:—"A poor country parson, fighting against the Devil in his parish, has nobler ideas than Alexander had." Men of the world know nothing of true glory: they know nothing of the grandeur of that sentiment—*Thou, O God, art the thing that I long for!* You may, perhaps, find this sentiment in the corner of some monastery, where a poor, ignorant creature is mumbling over his prayers: or, it may even be found to exist with the nonsense and fanaticism of a Swedenborgian: but, wherever it is, it is true dignity.

Look at the bravery of the world! Go into the Park. Who is the object of admiration there? The captain, swelling and strutting at the head of his corps! And what is there at the Court? "Make way! Make way!" And who is this? A bit of clay, with a ribbon tied round it! Now it makes nothing against the comparative emptiness and littleness of these things, that I or any man should be ensnared by them, and play the fool with the rest of the species.

Truth is truth, and dignity is dignity, in spite of the errors and folly of any man living.

But this is the outside. What are the greatest minds, and the noblest projects of the world, compared with a Christian! Take Mr. Pitt for an instance: and contrast him with the most insignificant old woman in the Church of Christ! If the Bible be not true, you have no standard: all your reasonings, and science, and philosophy, and metaphysics, are gross absurdity and folly. But, if the Bible be true, Mr. Pitt, great and noble as he is, yet, considered as a mere politician, even Mr. Pitt has a little, contracted, mean mind! a driveller! an earth-worm! Compared with his projects and schemes, the old woman, who rises at Two o'clock in the morning, lights her farthing-candle, stands all day over her wash-tub, at night puts on her red cloak, steals out to some place of worship, hears the truths of the Gospel mangled perhaps with ignorant yet honest zeal, but draws in good into an honest and prepared heart—why, this woman is a heroine—a noble mind—compared with the greatest of men, considered as a mere man of this world!

Bishop Wilkins had said admirably, That nothing in man is great, but so far as it is connected with God. The only wise thing recorded of Xerxes, is his reflection on the sight of his army—That not one of that immense multitude would survive a hundred years: it seems to have been a momentary gleam of true light and feeling.

APPENDIX

CONTAINING

REMARKS BY MR. CECIL

COMMUNICATED TO

THE EDITOR BY SOME FRIENDS

APPENDIX.

A HIDING-PLACE implies secrecy. He, who can say unto God. *Thou art my hiding-place*, may go abroad about his affairs, and may pass through a thousand dangers, and yet, at the same time, have such a hiding-place, in the favour and protection of God, that when he seems to be exposed on every side, still he is secured and hidden from every evil.

A GREAT man, however high his office and talents, is dependent on little things. *Jonah was exceeding glad of his gourd.* However splendid and towering, man is *crushed beneath the moth*, if God does not uphold him: so that, while we are admiring the great man as he is called, and however he may be disposed to admire himself and to speak *great swelling words of vanity*, facts will show that he is a poor dependent creature, who cannot live a moment without God. If the Holy Spirit open his eyes, he will perceive that he cannot stand alone; but can only support himself and climb, like the ivy, by clasping one stronger than himself.

DREAMS are common to sleeping. No man begins to slumber in religion, but he falls into some golden dream. It is a device of Satan to seduce men into a drowsy state, and then to beguile them with some dream. When the duties of religion become irksome, then he presents some novelty which allures and deceives us: whereas, had we been in life and vigour, we should have detected the deceit.

THERE are no greater objects of pity in the world, than men who are admired by all around for their nice discernment and fine taste in every thing of a worldly nature, but have no taste for the riches that endure for ever—no love for God or his word—no love for Christ or their souls. In such a state, however admired or respected, they cannot see the kingdom of God.

A SPIRITUAL man is a character that rises far above all worldly wisdom and science. He is described by our Lord as *born of the spirit*. Spiritual senses are given to him. He has a spiritual TASTE, that rejects whatever is injurious, and gladly receives whatever is salutary to the spiritual life: he *desires the sincere milk of the word, that he may grow thereby*. He has a spiritual SIGHT: he *looks, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*. He SMELLS a sweet savour in the things of God: *His name is as ointment poured forth*. He has a quick FEELING. And he has a spiritual EAR: *My sheep hear my voice*. He lives in a world of his own; he is tried by spiritual conflicts, and supported by spiritual comforts. If the things of God do not afford him consolation he droops, and nothing in this world can lift up his head: he will say to every other object, *Miserable comforters are ye all!* He is pursuing a spiritual end, and, while others boast and are puffed up with their great attainments, he is humbled in the dust and gives all glory to God.

THERE are critical circumstances, under which a man who is in general on his guard, is called to redouble his Christian vigilance. If he is about to encounter imminent danger, for instance, he will take care to secure himself by every possible means. A house may be well guarded and secured; but if there is any fear and expectation of thieves, every place will be

doubly barred and watched. Good care may be taken, in the general habits of a family, to guard against fire; but, if it be known that a spark has fallen among any combustibles, every possible search is made to discover it and to prevent its ravages. Thus should every servant of Christ redouble his guard in critical circumstances. He should remember, that while awful providences seem to be threatening us, and while we are surrounded with dangers on every side, and while the enemy of our souls is *going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour*, it ill becomes us to trifle. Let us stir up ourselves, and attend to our Master's admonition, *Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.*

If St. Paul had not been an entire character, he would not have spoken so ingenuously of himself as he does in the viith to the Romans. He would have acted as many others have done: he would have put the best aspect on things. He would not have opened *the chambers of imagery;* and have showed, while all the Church was admiring him, what was passing within. Here were real simplicity and humility—nothing of that Pharisee which he once was. The Pharisee is become a Publican: the reality is coming forward: and he seems to say, "Is any man groaning under *a body of sin and death?*—on searching his heart, does he find that therein *dwelleth no good thing?*—This is my case also: and if I have any thing wherein to glory, it is in Christ and not in myself."

Charity should teach us to exercise hope and love toward all men—hope toward those who are without, and love toward those who are within, the walls of the City of God. Of those without, we are apt to des-

pair too soon, and to say *There is no hope;* when we should labour to allure them into the Church of God, and to impress them with a sense of its glory and its privileges. Toward those within the walls, we sometimes fail in the exercise of love: we are too much influenced in our feelings toward them, by a difference of education, taste, or disposition; while the great question ought to be, "Are they really *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God?*"—*and* if so, whatever their defects may be, we ought to honour and love them as the *Temples of the Holy Ghost.*

When Christians are delivered from trouble, they are apt soon to forget it; and to lose sight of the holy resolutions formed while under affliction: the strong impressions soon decay. Whereas if we were enabled *to glory in tribulation*—if our consciences were made tender—if more reality were put into our prayers—we should take heed how we give way to an evil heart of unbelief: we should remember, too, how our troubles were brought on us, and the benefits which we received while they continued! we should watch that we might not estimate them falsely; and, at all times, we should bear it in our mind, that it is not suffering which hurts us, but sin.

Some men will follow Christ on certain conditions—if he will not lead them through rough roads—if he will not enjoin them any painful tasks—if the sun and wind do not annoy them—if he will remit a part of his plan and order. But the true Christian, who has the Spirit of Jesus, will say, as Ruth said to Naomi, "*Whither thou goest, I will go!*" whatever difficulties and dangers may be in the way.

It is our happiness, as Christians, that, however we may change our place, we shall never change our object. Whatever we lose, we shall not lose that which we esteem *better than life*. God has made to us this gracious promise—*I will dwell in them, and walk in them*. And though we may endure much affliction, and pass through many deep waters, yet this is our honour and comfort, THE LORD IS WITH US! and then —what is difficulty?—what is tribulation?—what is death?—Death to a Christian is but an entrance into the city of God! it is but joining a more blessed company, and singing a more exalted strain, than he can do in this world.

The way of every man is declarative of the end of that man.

How difficult is it to show those who are in the House of Mourning, that God is teaching them, that, if they had not leaned so much on their creature-supports, they had not been so broken! Still they are crying, *O Absalom, my son, my son!* Why is it that we are shocked to see the world falling to pieces around us, when we shall leave it ourselves to-morrow—perhaps to-day? We forget that it is the design of God to dash every thing to pieces. It is by these trials that we begin to learn we have been walking by sense rather than by faith—and looking at our children and our possessions as though we were never to lose them.

It is by FAITH that we are relieved under the difficulties of SENSE. Sense revolts, when it views our great High Priest on the cross—Faith glories in this object! Sense talks like the Jews: *He saved others: himself he cannot save: if he be now the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

Faith lays hold on him as the Saviour of the World. and cries *Lord! remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!* Sense envies the prosperous worldling. and calls him happy—Faith goes into the sanctuary. to see what his end will be. When the waves run high, Sense clamours—Faith says, "Speak but the word, and the winds and waves shall obey thee." When we feel our *earthly house of this tabernacle* taking down. Sense sinks—but Faith says, *We know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

Wisdom prepares for the worst: but Folly leaves the worst for that day when it comes.

Abraham teaches us the right way of conversing with God:—*And Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him!* When we plead with Him our faces should be in the dust: we shall not then speak lightly of him. nor complain; nor will there be any more boasting. We shall abase ourselves and exalt God!

The Christian's secret intercourse with God will make itself manifest to the world. We may not see the husbandman cast the seed into the ground, yet when the corn grows and ripens we know that it was sown. The mere professor, who may be found everywhere but in his secret chamber, may think that with care he shall pass for a good Christian: but he mistakes, for the spirit will discover itself, of what sort it is. He, who would walk safely and honourably, must walk closely with God in secret.

A variety of circumstances render the sinner's first approaches to Christ difficult. They, who find an easy access, will find an easy departure when troubles arise.

THE most likely method we can take to hasten the removal of what we love, is, to value it too much—to think on it with endless anxiety—to LIVE on its favour with solicitude. It shall soon either become a thorn in our side, or be taken away.

BE *ye not unequally yoked.* If a believer marries an unbeliever, the miseries which ensue are endless. Were they determined, in kindness, to grant all they could to each other; yet they live as in two separate worlds. There is a great gulph between them, which cannot be passed without the grace of God; on which, while all should hope and pray for it, none should presume. They cannot taste the same pleasures, nor share the same sorrows, nor pursue the same objects, nor walk in the same path. What hope, then, can there be of comfort? Every Christian finds the corruptions of his own heart, the snares of the world, and the devices of Satan, together with innumerable secret anxieties, quite enough to struggle with in his journey to heaven, without adding another to his difficulties.

IN studying the word of God, digest it under these two heads: either as removing obstructions, which keep God and thee asunder; or as supplying some uniting power to bring God and thee together.

PERHAPS it is a greater energy of Divine Power, which keeps the Christian from day to day, from year to year—praying, hoping, running, believing—against all hindrances—which maintains him as a LIVING martyr: than that which bears him up for an hour in sacrificing himself at the stake.

By the course of his Providence, God will assert the liberty of his council.

Let me ask, every day, what reference it has to the Day of Judgment; and cultivate a disposition to be reminded of that day.

Indulge not a gloomy contempt of any thing which is in itself good; only let it keep its place.

God has called us to meet his best gift to man—his only-begotten Son—not in a splendid court, but in a manger! in the wilderness! in Gethsemane! before the High Priest, when they spat in his face, and buffeted him, and smote him! at the cross! and at the sepulchre? Thus it is that he corrects the pride and ambition of the human heart.

There is in sin, not only an infinite mischief done to the man, but it is accompanied by an infatuation that surpasses all description. When the heart declines from God, and loses communion with Christ, the man resembles one in a consumption, who is on the brink of the grave and yet talks of a speedy recovery! A death will come on the spirit, which will be perceived and felt by all around: yet, when the most affectionate friends of such a man attempt to expostulate, they often find him not only insensible but obstinate and stout-hearted. He who, like Samson, the champion of Israel, lays his head in the lap of temptation, will rarely rise again as he lay down: he may say, *I will go out, as at other times before, and shake myself*: but *he wists not that the Lord is departed from him! Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not!*

THE whole life of Christ was one continued expression of the same desire:—"Let me lay aside my glory—let me expire on the cross—so that thy kingdom may come!" And the blood of every martyr, who ever suffered in the cause of God, cried, "Let thy Kingdom come!"

GROWTH in grace manifests itself by a simplicity—that is, a greater naturalness of character. There will be more usefulness, and less noise: more tenderness of conscience, and less scrupulosity: there will be more peace, more humility: when the full corn is in the ear, it bends down because it is full.

THE history of all the great characters of the Bible is summed up in this one sentence:—they acquainted themselves with God, and acquiesced in his will in all things.

GOD'S way of answering the Christian's prayer for an increase of patience, experience, hope, and love—usually is to put him into the furnace of tribulation. St. James therefore says, *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* People of the world *count it all joy* when they are in ease and affluence; but a Christian is taught to *count it all joy* when he is tried as gold in the fire.

IN Christ we see the most perfect exhibition of every grace, to which we, as his followers, are called. Let there be but in us that poverty of spirit—that disposition to bear with provocations, and to forgive injuries—that obedience to God and acquiescence in his will—that perseverance in doing good—that love which overcometh all difficulties—that meekness, humility, patience, compassion, and gentleness which were

found in Christ; and if any man should be so ignorant and debased as to imagine that this is not TRUE DIGNITY OF CHARACTER, let it be remembered that this was *the mind which was also in Christ Jesus!*

LOOKING back is more than we can sustain without going back!

WHEN the multitudes followed our Lord on a particular occasion, although he wished for retirement and had gone purposely to seek it, yet he gave up his design and attended to them. Mark the condescension and tenderness of such conduct, in opposition to a sour, monastic, morose temper. We are too fond of our own will. We want to be doing what we fancy mighty things; but the great point is, to do small things, when called to them, in a right spirit.

THE world will allow of a vehemence approaching to ecstacy, on almost any occasion but that, which, above all others, will justify it.

A CHRISTIAN will find his parenthesis for prayer, even through his busiest hours.

WE treat sensible and present things as realities, and future and eternal things as fables: whereas the reverse should be our habit.

AN Enthusiast will COURT trouble, and that for ITSELF: but a Christian, while he does not COURT it, yet rejoices in it; not for its own sake, but because he knows that *tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*—a *hope* that *maketh*

not ashamed. While *patience* is the fruit of his conflicts and trials, he gains *experience* by them: he acquires the knowledge which a traveller obtains in performing a long journey: he is in possession of a bundle of choice maxims and observations, gathered with much pains: he is taught by them to know his own heart: he is brought acquainted with the faithfulness and mercy of God, in holding him up in the deep waters, and accompanying him through the fire of affliction. And this experience produces *hope*—a hope that he is savingly united to Christ—a hope that he is in the Church of God—*a hope of the glory of God*—a hope that *maketh not ashamed*, keeping us steady at anchor through every storm, and when every other support fails.

There are but two states in the world which may be pronounced happy—either that of the man who rejoices in the light of God's countenance, or that of him who mourns after it.

Let the warm-hearted Christian be careful of receiving a wrong bias in religion. When a ball is in motion, almost any thing presented to it obliquely will turn it wholly out of its course. Beware, therefore, of a wrong direction in Christianity. Fix your attention ever on such examples as St. John and St. Paul, and hear how they speak: *If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema, Maranatha!*

God denies a Christian nothing, but with a design to give him something better.

God teaches some of his best lessons in the school of Affliction. It is said that St. Paul's Epistle to the

Ephesians has quite the spirit and air of a prison. That school must be truly excellent, which produces such experience and wisdom.

We cannot build too confidently on the merits of Christ, as our only hope; nor can we think too much of *the mind that was in Christ*, as our great example.

A CHRISTIAN does not *glory in tribulation*, as he does in the cross of Christ. The Cross of Christ is the OBJECT in which he glories: but he glories in tribulation as an appointed MEANS and INSTRUMENT in the hand of God, of accomplishing his own pleasure and promoting our real good.

Never was there a man of deep piety, who has not been brought into extremities—who has not been put into the fire—who has not been taught to say, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!*

A CHRISTIAN'S steps are not only safe, but steady. *He, that believeth, shall not make haste.* When DANGER approaches, he shall not be thrown into confusion from his alarm, so as to be ready to say, "Whither shall I run?" but, finding himself on safe ground, he shall be quiet. Being built on the sure foundation and *stablished in Christ*, he shall not make haste in his EXPECTATIONS: he shall not make haste with respect to the promises, as though they were long in their accomplishment, knowing that *all the promises of God are Yea, and, in Christ, Amen!* In AFFLICTION, he shall not make haste in running to broken cisterns; as Asa did, when, *in his disease, he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians:* he shall not be

alarmed, or driven about, as one who has not a strong-hold to enter; but shall say, *None of these things move me! neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy!* With respect to his CHARACTER, the Christian shall not make haste: if a cloud come over his reputation, and men will suspect his integrity without grounds, he will commit himself to God, and wait his opportunity, and not make rash haste to justify and clear his character.

WHEN a man can say, "My God!" if he can add no more, that is sufficient: for my God is all-wise in appointing, and almighty to uphold and to deliver. My God is a Father to me in Christ: yea he is a Father who hid his face from Christ for my good. If, then, I am in darkness, let me remember that God never had a Son that was not sometimes in the dark; for even Christ, his only-begotten Son, cried out, *My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me?*

FEW Christians, if any, sufficiently honour Christ, as governing their concerns. They do not say, "Now while I am praying on earth, my Saviour is working for me in heaven. He is saying to one, 'Do this!' and to another, 'Do that!' and all for my good?" While Jeremiah was, doubtless, crying to God out of the dungeon, Ebed-melech was interceding for him with the king, and they were preparing the means of his deliverance. See Jer. xxxviii.

LET the restless, comfortless state of a backslider distinguish him from an apostate.

If you have set out in the ways of God, do not stumble at present difficulties. Go forward. Look not behind.

Something must be left as a test of the loyalty of the heart—in Paradise, the Tree: in Israel, a Canaanite: in us, Temptation.

Religious joy is a holy, a delicate deposit. It is a pledge of something greater, and must not be thought lightly of: for let it be withdrawn only for a little, and, notwithstanding the experience we may have had of it, we shall find no living creature can restore it to us, and we can only, with David, cry, *Restore unto me, O Lord, the joy of thy salvation.*

A christian should beware of that temptation, *Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?* He should remember, if it is a time of extremity, that is the very reason why he should *wait.* If his way is so hedged up that he cannot go forward, he should say, "Now is the time for me to stand still, and wait till God opens my way." *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path.*

Human nature is always putting forth its fears and unbelief, in anxious questions concerning *to-morrow*, or some threatening calamity: but Christ says to every Christian, "*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid: I go to prepare a place for you;* and I will protect and guide you throughout the journey thither."

God with us is the traveller's security. Jacob was destitute: he had a long and dreary journey, but God

said, *Behold I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest.*

God calls not for *thousands of rams*, nor *ten thousands of rivers of oil:* he calls not his creatures to live in sackcloth and ashes, nor sets them to perform long pilgrimages, nor to inflict pains on their bodies. No! the rigours of superstition are from MAN. The voice of God is, "Be happy, here and for ever! Fly that which will make you miserable every where! *Come unto me, all that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest!*"

The voice of Christ is, *My Son, give me thy heart!* and to him who obeys, he will say, "Go in peace! Go into the Grave! go to Judgment! go into Eternity! go in peace!"

A CHRISTIAN must stand in a posture to receive every message which God shall send. He must be so prepared, as to be like one who is called to set off on a sudden journey, and has nothing to do but to set out at a moment's notice: or like a merchant who has goods to send abroad, and has them all packed up and in readiness for the first sail.

How many people go out of their sphere under good pretences!

A PERSON who objects to tell a friend of his faults, because he has faults of his own, acts as a surgeon would who should refuse to dress another person's wound because he had a dangerous one himself.

When the most insignificant person tells us we are wrong, we ought to listen. Let us believe it possible we may be wrong, when any one supposes we are; and enter into the true littleness which consists in receiving correction like a child.

No man rejects a Minister of God who faithfully performs his office, till he has rejected God.

The plainest declarations of God's favour, and the strongest encouragements, are generally manifested in the darkest night of trial. Who could be more destitute than Jacob, when he lay down in the desart with a stone for his pillow? See also Acts, xxvii, 20—24. 2 Cor. i, 3, 4, 5.

The *pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the Lord their God.* This is the worst symptom in a sinner—when he is too proud to go to God. Whatever be our condition, if there is contrition of spirit under it there is hope of that man. There is no room for despair, to whatever lengths a man may have gone in sin, if he can smite on his breast, and say, "O Lord! though my sins testify against me, yet thou art a God of compassion. Do thou it, for thy name's sake."

A christian should never attempt to try his state while under a temptation: he might as well attempt to examine the face of the moon while she is under an eclipse. But, when he finds corrupt nature setting in with a temptation—and who has not felt this?—let him remember his Great Physician. This is the glory of the Son of God, that no case, either of the body or of the soul, was ever found too hard for Him!

Blessed be God, that we have in Him a hiding-place —a covert from the storm—a refuge from all our enemies!

The great care of the man who is content with the form of godliness without the power, is, that every thing should be right without; while the true Christian is most careful that every thing should be right within. It would be nothing to him to be applauded by the whole world, if he had not the approbation of God and his own conscience. Real religion is, therefore, a living principle. Any one may make a show, and be called a Christian, and unite himself to a sect, and be admired:—but for a man to enter into the sanctuary; to hold secret communion with God; to retire into his closet, and transact all his affairs with an unseen Saviour; to walk with God like Enoch, and yet to smite on his breast with the Publican, having no confidence in the flesh and triumphing only in Christ Jesus—these are the life and acts of a new creature!

O Lord! let me have any thing, *but* thy Frown; and any thing *with* thy Smile!*

Whatever, below God, is the object of our love, will, at some time or other, be the matter of our sorrow.

Take care, Christian! whatever you meet with in your way, that you forget not your father! When the proud and wealthy rush by in triumph, while you are poor and in sorrow, hear the voice of your Father saying, "My Son! had I loved them, I should have

* "Give what thou canst, without Thee we are poor;
And with Thee rich, take what thou wilt away.
Cowper, Task V. J. F.

corrected THEM too. I give them up to the ways of their own hearts: but to my children, if I give sorrow, it is that I may lead them to a crown of glory that fadeth not away!"

IT is by Faith that we contemplate unseen things. To the eye of a clown, a planet appears but a twinkling star: but if he looked through a telescope, and were able to calculate, he would perceive that it was a great world, and would be astonished at its distance and magnitude. While the gay and the busy are moving on their little mole-hills, full of anxiety, Faith thus reaches beyond the world: it views Death as at hand: it looks at Heaven, and catches a glimpse of its glory: it looks at Hell, and sees the torments of the condemned: it looks at Judgment, and realizes that awful day: it looks at Eternity, and says, *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

WHERE there is a real character, a man will not sit down in the Christian conflict, and say, "If I must carry about with me this body of death, I must submit. I must bear these enemies as quietly as I can!" No! he will say, as St. Paul seems to say, "I will be on no terms with sin! I will raise an outcry against the corrupt nature! I will triumph in my Physician! His grace is sufficient for me: I will wait for a cure, and wait for it in the appointed way. I see light, and hope, and liberty; and I thank God, that if I am a sinner, yet I am a saved sinner!"

God *hath set the day of prosperity and the day of adversity, the one over against the other*—as the clouds are gathered, for rain, by the shining of the sun: and, if for a moment they are blown aside, we must expect their return. Where, in our sky, should we look for clouds? where it is brightest: where our expectations are highest. Our sharpest sorrows arise out of our sweetest comforts. Rachel said, *Give me children, or else I die:* and, in obtaining what she esteemed her highest comfort—what she would have at any rate—was hidden the cause of her sharpest grief. God gave her children: and, in bearing her second child, *it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni—the Son of my Sorrow.*

Who is the most miserable man on earth? and whither shall we go to seek him? Not to the tavern! not to the theatre! not even to a brothel!—but to the Church! That man who has sat Sabbath after Sabbath under the awakening and affecting calls of the Gospel, and has hardened his heart against these calls—he is the man whose condition is the most desperate of all others. *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.*

Give every kind of knowledge its due attention and respect: but what science is to be compared to the knowledge of Christ crucified? Had a traveller lost his way in some desert, where he had wandered till he was fainting with hunger and thirst, for what would he first ask?—for music?—for paintings?—No! he would ask for bread—for water! Any thing else offered him would be a mocking of his misery.

What an oppressive burden is taken off a Christian's shoulders, by his privilege of leaving all consequences, while in the path of duty, to God! He has done with—"How shall *I* bear this trouble?" "How shall *I* remove this difficulty?" "How shall *I* get through this deep water?" but leaves himself in the hands of God.

We may form some idea of the joys of heaven, by the innocent pleasures which God grants us on earth. Here is a fine situation, with wonderful prospects: every thing to delight the senses: yet all this we find in a world which is under a curse! what then may we not expect in a heavenly world, where God exercises all his power for our blessedness?

However ill men may treat us, we should never give them a handle to say that we misbehaved ourselves. Were I to meet my most bitter adversary, and know that he was come with the most malicious intentions, I should endeavour to be so on my guard, that he could not lay his finger, with truth, on any part of my conduct.

The motive determines the quality of actions. One man may do a penurious act, because he knows he shall be put to difficulties if he does not: another may do the same from mere avarice. The king of Edom offered up his son on the wall, and his abominable cruelty excited just indignation: but Abraham, having in intention offered up his son, is held forth to all generations for this act as the Father of the Faithful.

It is always a sign of poverty of mind, where men are ever aiming to appear great: for they who are really great, never seem to know it.

What the world calls the best company is such, as a pious mechanic would not condescend to keep: he would rather say, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!*

One way of reading the Bible with advantage is, to pay it great homage: so that, when we come to any part which we cannot connect with other passages, we must conclude that this arises from our ignorance, but that the seeming contrarieties are in themselves quite reconcileable.

Young Christians, on setting out in life, often mistake greatly in not sufficiently attributing events to the immediate providence of God. They are not reluctant, at the end, to acknowledge that their way has been directed; but they do not enough mark it as they go on. There is a habit of saying "Such a thing may TURN UP," as if it depended on chance; whereas nothing will turn up, but what was ordered long before. One cause of this evil is, that the divinity of our day deals too much in common-place: certain fundamental truths are set forth; and if a man professes these truths, too little account is made of the faith, dependence, and other graces of a Christian. When a man becomes a Christian he is written upon, as it were, "TO BE PROVIDED FOR!"—and he ought, therefore, to notice, as he goes on, how Providence does provide for him.

Men mistake in nothing so much, as when they resist their dispensation: for, while God shutteth up a man,

there can be no opening. Resistance does but make the dispensation harder to be borne. Job says, *He teareth himself in his anger: but shall the Rock be removed because of thee?* The man is, as it were, in a labyrinth; and the hand, which brought him in, must be the hand to conduct him out.

We require the same hand to protect us in apparent safety, as in the most imminent and palpable danger. One of the most wicked men in my neighbourhood was riding near a precipice, and fell over: his horse was killed, but he escaped without injury: instead of thanking God for his deliverance, he refused to acknowledge the hand of God therein, but attributed his escape to chance. The same man was afterward riding on a very smooth road: his horse suddenly tripped and fell, and threw his rider over his head, and killed him on the spot, while the horse escaped unhurt.

If a man is dead in sin, our attempting to correct his false notion is like laying a dead man straight, who before was lying crooked. The man is dead, and will remain so; though, before, he was lying crooked, and is now lying straight. It matters little what right notions we may have, while we are dead in sin; for we shall never act up to them, till God awakens our hearts.

To have too much forethought, is the part of a WRETCH: to have too little, is the part of a FOOL.

SELF-WILL is so ardent and active, that it will break a world to pieces, to make a stool to sit on.

We are too little acquainted with the sacred character of God. *A certain man sold a possession, and brought a certain part of the price.* We should have thought this a generous act: but God saw that there wanted a right estimation of his character. Many sins are suffered to pass, to be punished hereafter: but God sometimes breaks out, and strikes an offender dead in vindication of his own glory.

Remember always to mix good sense with good things, or they will become disgusting.

Things are not to be done by the effort of the moment, but by the preparation of past moments.

If there is any person to whom you feel dislike, that is the person of whom you ought never to speak.

Irritability urges us to take a step as much too soon, as sloth does too late.

When we read the Bible we must always remember, that, like the holy waters seen by Ezekiel,* it is, in some places, up *to the ancles;* in others, up *to the knees;* in others, up *to the loins;* and, in some, *a river* too deep to be fathomed, and that *cannot be passed over.* There is light enough to guide the humble and teachable to heaven, and obscurity enough to confound the unbeliever.

True religion, as revealed in the Scriptures, may be compared to a plum on the tree, covered with its

* Ezek. ch. xlvii.

bloom. Men gather the plum, and handle it, and turn and twist it about, till it is deprived of all its native bloom and beauty: the fairest hand would as much rob the plum of its bloom, as any other. Now all that little party-spirit, which so much prevails among men, and which leads them to say, *I am of Paul and I of Apollos*—is but handling the plum till it loses its bloom.

THERE are but two classes of the wise:—the men who serve God, because they have found him; and the men who seek him, because they have found him not. All others may say, *Is there not a lie in my right-hand?*

PHILOSOPHY is a proud, sullen detector of the poverty and misery of man. It may turn him from the world with a proud, sturdy contempt: but it cannot come forward and say, "Here are rest—grace—peace—strength—consolation!"

WE hear much of a DECENT pride—a BECOMING pride—a NOBLE pride—a LAUDABLE pride! Can that be DECENT, of which we ought to be ashamed?—Can that be BECOMING, of which God has set forth the deformity?—Can that be NOBLE, which God resists, and is determined to debase?—Can that be LAUDABLE, which God calls abominable?

MANY things are spoken of, in the Scriptures, as good: but there is not one thing emphatically called GOOD, which does not relate to Christ or his coming.

SAY the strongest things you can, with candour and kindness, to a man's face; and make the best excuse

you can for him, with truth and justice, behind his back.

Many people labour to make the narrow way wider. They may dig a path into the broad way; but the way to life must remain a narrow way to the end.

All extremes are error. The reverse of error is not truth, but error. Truth lies between these extremes.

I have no doubt, but that there are persons of every description, under every possible circumstance, in every lawful calling among Christians, who will go to heaven—that all the world may see, that neither their circumstances nor calling prevented their being among the number of the blessed.

God has given us four books: the Book of Grace; the Book of Nature; the Book of the World; and the Book of Providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books: it does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them.

Eloquence is vehement simplicity.

God is omniscient as well as omnipotent: and Omniscience may see reason to withhold what Omnipotence could bestow.

Attend to the presence of God: this will dignify a small congregation, and annihilate a large one.

Having some business to transact with a gentleman in the city, I called one day at his Counting House: he begged I would call again, as I had so much more time to spare than he had, who was a man of business. "An hour is nothing with you," said he—"An hour nothing to a Clergyman!" said I: "you seem little to understand the nature of our profession. One hour of a Clergyman's time rightly employed, Sir, is worth more to him, than all the gains of your merchandise."

If a man has a quarrelsome temper, let him alone. The World will soon find him employment. He will soon meet with some one stronger than himself, who will repay him better than you can. A man may fight duels all his life, if he is disposed to quarrel.

One day I got off my horse to kill a rat, which I found on the road only half killed. I am shocked at the thoughtless cruelty of many people: yet I did a thing soon after, that has given me considerable uneasiness, and for which I reproach myself bitterly. As I was riding homeward, I saw a wagon standing at a door, with three horses: the two foremost were eating their corn from bags at their noses; but I observed the third had dropt his on the ground, and could not stoop to get any food. However I rode on, in absence, without assisting him. But when I had got nearly home, I remembered what I had observed in my absence of mind, and felt extremely hurt at my neglect; and would have ridden back had I not thought the wagoner might have come out of the house and relieved the horse. A man could not have had a better demand for getting off his horse, than for such an act of humanity. It is by absence of mind, that we omit many duties.

A WICKED man is a candidate for nothing but Hell!—However he may live, if his conscience were awake he would turn pale at this question, *What shall I do in the end thereof?*

THERE is a great defect in Gray's Elegy. You cannot read it without feeling a melancholy: there is no sunshine—no hope after death: it shows the dark side only of mortality. But a man refined as he was, and speculating on the bankruptcy of human nature, if he brought not evangelical views into the estimate, COULD describe human nature only as HOPELESS and FORLORN: whereas what HE felt a subject of melancholy, is with me included in the calculation. I know it MUST be so, and, according to my views, should be disappointed if it were not so.—*My Kingdom*, said our Lord, *is not of this world.*

REVELATION never staggers me. There may be a *tertium quid*, though we are not yet in possession of it, which would put an end to all our present doubts and questions. I was one day riding with a friend: we were discussing a subject, and I expressed myself much surprised that such a measure was not adopted. "If I were to tell you one thing," said he, "it would make all clear." I gave him credit that there did exist something, which would entirely dispel my objections. Now if this be the case, in many instances, between man and man, is it an unreasonable conclusion, that all the unaccountable points, which we may observe in the providence and government of God, should be all perfection in the Divine mind? Take the growth of a seed—I cannot possibly say what first produces the progress of growth in the grain. Take voluntary motion—I cannot possibly say where action begins and thought ends. The proportion between a fly's mind and a man's is no adequate illustration of the state of

man with respect to God; because there is some proportion between the minds or faculties of two finite creatures, but there can be none between finite man and the Infinite God.

One little Preacher will endeavour to prove, with a great deal of warmth, the truth of Calvinistic principles:—and another little Preacher will clearly demonstrate the truth of the Arminian scheme. Good sense will go between them, and say, "There are certain things *written* on these subjects—"*Thus saith the Lord*:" good sense will hesitate to push what is said to all its apparent conclusions, for—*It is written again*. Here ends all dogmatism with a wise man.

A mouse that had lived all his life in a chest, says the fable, chanced one day to creep up to the edge, and, peeping out, exclaimed with wonder—"I did not think the world was so large."

The first step to knowledge, is, to know that we are ignorant. It is a great point to know our place: for want of this, a man in private life, instead of attending to the affairs in his "chest," is ever peeping out, and then he becomes a philosopher! he must then know every thing, and presumptuously pry into the deep and secret councils of God—not considering that man is finite, and has no faculties to comprehend and judge of the great scheme of things. We can form no other idea of the dispensations of God, nor can have any knowledge of spiritual things, except what God has taught us in his word; and, where he stops, we must stop. He has not told us why he permitted the Angels to fall—why he created Adam—why he suffered sin to enter into the world—why Christ came in the latter ages—when he will come to judgment—what will be the doom of the Heathen nations—nor why our state throughout eternity was made to

depend on such a moment as man's life: all these are secrets of his counsel. *Where was thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth?* God urges it on us again and again, that Sin HAS entered—and that we must *flee from the wrath to come.* Christ, in the days of his flesh, never gratified curiosity: he answered every inquiry according to the SPIRIT of the inquirer, not according to the letter of the inquiry: if any man came in humility for instruction, he always instructed; but, when any came to gratify a vain curiosity, he answered, as when one said *Lord, are there few that be saved?*—STRIVE TO ENTER IN AT THE STRAIT GATE!—or, as when another inquired, *Lord, and what shall this man do?—What is that to thee?* FOLLOW THOU ME.

WE are too ready to say, in trouble, *All these things are against me!* But a Christian should say, "This or that may seem against me! but there is mercy for me: there is a Saviour: there is God's word: and there are his ordinances. He should be more careful to enumerate what is FOR him, than what is AGAINST him. He should look over to the list of his spiritual and temporal mercies, as well as that of his sorrows: and remember, that what things are AGAINST him are so on account of his sin. Our pilgrimage is but short:—let us make use of our helps and means. God has given us a guide, and a support to lean on: when the clouds gather, we have only to look to Jesus. We are not to expect the joys of Heaven while on Earth:—let us be content that there is a highway for us to walk in, and a leader to conduct us in that way.

IT is a Christian's business, as much as possible, consistently with his duty, to lessen his cares and occupations in the world. It is very common to hear Christians complain what a hinderance business is, while

they are, perhaps at the very time, too anxious to increase it! There is some fallacy, too, in the complaint: for, where there is a principle of grace, it will prevail even in a multitude of engagements. There is much difference between SEEKING busy situations, and BEING FOUND in them.

WHAT we call "taking steps in life," are most serious occurrences;—especially if there be, in the motive, any mixture of ambition. *Wherefore gaddest thou about to change thy way?*

THE dispensation of grace to some, is little more than a continual combat with corruptions: so that, instead of advancing, a man seems to be but just able to preserve himself from sinking. A boat, with the tide full against it, does well if it can keep from driving back, and must have strong force indeed to get forward. We must estimate grace by the opposition which it meets with.

How blessed is the Christian, in the midst of his greatest troubles! It is true we cannot say he is perfect in holiness—that he has never any doubts—that his peace of mind is never interrupted—that he never mistakes Providence: but, after all, his is a blessed condition; for he is supported under his trials, and instructed by the discipline; and, as to his fears, the evil under the apprehension of which he is ready to sink, frequently does not come—or it does not continue—or it is turned into a blessing.

ONE of the greatest impositions of Satan on the mind, is that of quieting a man in the pursuit or possession of what is lawful. So that it is not murder, or adul-

tery, or theft which he is committing, all is well! Because a man's bed is his own, he may idle away in it his inestimable time! Because his business is lawful, a man may intoxicate his mind with the pursuit of it!

The very heart and root of sin, is an independent spirit. We erect the Idol SELF; and not only wish others to worship, but worship it ourselves.

We must take care when we draw parallel cases, not to take such as are not or cannot be made parallel. For instance—we may ask, before we act, "What would Jesus Christ do in this case? or what would St. Paul?" but we cannot be guided by this rule in every thing, because Christ's mission was peculiar: it was an unparalleled event: it was for three years only: and, like a great fire, he was always burning—always intent on one point. St. Paul also was in peculiar circumstances: he was sent on an especial errand. In every thing which is in any degree sinful, we should turn to these examples; but, in the conduct peculiar to our station, our application of these examples, must be governed by circumstances.

Many inexperienced Christians are apt to look for wrong kind of evidences, and so distress themselves about their state. The questions which we should put to ourselves, in seeking the best evidences, are—"Do I hate sin?—Is it my grand fear?—Is it my grief, that, while I have a good hope of pardon, I yet should make such ill returns? Have I brokenness of spirit?"—Godliness is analogous to the principle of gravitation, in that it reduces every thing to its proper centre.

THE difference between what is called FATE, and PREDESTINATION, is something like that of a house *without* a governor, and a house *with* a governor. The Fatalist says, "Every thing must, of necessity, be as it is—as a stone *must* fall to the ground, fire *must* ascend, &c." The Predestinarian says, that every thing is determined by a wise Governor, who inspects, orders, and superintends the whole machine; so that a sparrow does not fall to the ground, or a hair of the head perish without permission.

WE are so accustomed to see sin within and without us, that we seldom deeply feel it; or are so shocked at it, as we should be were it less frequent. If an inhabitant of the Court were to walk through some of the filthy streets and alleys of the Metropolis, how would he be disgusted and terrified! while the poor wretches, who live in them, think nothing of the matter. Thus a clearer view of sin and of the holiness of God, made the Prophet cry out, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.*

IT is much easier to SETTLE a point, than to ACT on it.

I ONCE said to myself, in the foolishness of my heart, "What sort of Sermon must that have been which was preached by St. Peter, when three thousand souls were converted at ONCE!"—what sort of Sermon!—such as other sermons. There is nothing to be found in it extraordinary. The effect was not produced by St. Peter's eloquence; but by the mighty power of God, present with his word. It is in vain to attend one Minister after another, and to hear Sermon after

Sermon, unless we pray that the Holy Spirit accompany his word. *Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.*

That humility, which courts notice is not FIRST-RATE. It may be sincere, but it is sullied. Do not sound a trumpet, nor say, "Come and see how humble I am!"

We should be careful never to discourage any one who is but searching after God. If a man begins in earnest *to feel after him if haply he may find him*, let us be aware how we stop him, by rashly telling him he is not seeking in the right way. This would be like setting fire to the first round of the ladder, by which one was attempting to escape. We must wait for a fit season to communicate light. Had any one told me when I first began to think religiously, that I was not seeking God in the right way, I might have been discouraged from seeking him at all. I was much indebted to my mother, for her truly wise and judicious conduct toward me when I first turned from my vanity and sin.

We should always record our thoughts in affliction—set up way-marks—set up our Bethels—erect our Ebenezers; that we may recur to them in health: for then we are in other circumstances, and can never recover our sick-bed views.

A CONTEMPLATIVE life has more the APPEARANCE of a life of piety than any other: but it is the divine plan to bring faith into ACTIVITY and EXERCISE. We choose that sort of walk, which we like best: if we

love quiet, we are for sedentary piety; but the design of God is to root us out of every thing, and bring us into more useful stations.

A WRETCHED prisoner, chained to the floor for a length of time, would deem it a high privilege to be allowed to walk across the room. Another, confined to lie on his back till it had become sore, would think it a great favour if he might be permitted to turn on his side for a few minutes. In a course of habitual pain, I am thankful for five minutes freedom from suffering; how forgetful have I been of fifty years of tolerable ease! How unmindful are we of what we call common mercies!

IN order to read the Bible with profit, we must begin by denying ourselves every step of the way; for, every step of the way, it will be found to oppose our corrupt nature.

CHRISTIANS resemble travellers in a stage-coach. We are full of our plans and schemes, but the coach is moving rapidly forward: it passes one mile-stone, and then another; and no regard is paid to the plots and plans of the passengers.

A CHRISTIAN has advanced but a little way in religion when he has overcome the love of the world; for he has still more powerful and importunate enemies: self—evil tempers—pride—undue affections—a stubborn will—it is by the subduing of these adversaries, that we must chiefly judge of our growth in grace.

A FRIEND called on me when I was ill, to settle some business. My head was too much confused by my indisposition to understand fully what he said; but I had such unlimited confidence in him, that I did whatever he bid me, in the fullest assurance that it was right. How simply I can trust in man, and how little in God! How unreasonable is a pure act of faith in one like ourselves, if we cannot repose the same faith in God!

SOME NEGATIVE RULES

GIVEN TO A

YOUNG MINISTER

GOING INTO A SITUATION OF PECULIAR DIFFICULTY.

As I know you have received much good advice, I would suggest to you a few hints of a negative kind: with a view of admonishing you to be careful, while you are doing your work, not by any mistakes of your own to hinder your success—

I. BY FORGETTING THAT YOUR SUCCESS WITH OTHERS IS VERY MUCH CONNECTED WITH YOUR PERSONAL CHARACTER.

Herod *heard John gladly*, and he *did many things*: because he knew the preacher to be a just and holy man. Words uttered from the heart find their way to the heart, by a holy sympathy. Character is power:—

"A good man seen, though silent, counsel gives."

If you would make deep impressions on others, you must use all means to have them first formed on your own mind. Avoid, at the same time, *all appearances of evil*—as a covetous or worldly, a vain or assuming, a careless or indevout deportment. Never suffer jesting with sacred persons or things. Satan will employ such antidotes as these, to counteract the operation of that which is effective and gracious in a Minister's character.

II. BY PLACING YOUR DEPENDANCE ON ANY MEANS, QUALITIES, OR CIRCUMSTANCES, HOWEVER EXCELLENT IN THEMSELVES.

The direct way to render a thing weak, is, to lean on it as strong. *God is a jealous God; and will utterly abolish idols* as means of success. He designs to demonstrate that men and creatures are what he makes them, and that only. This also should be your encouragement:—looking, in the diligent and humble use of means, to that Spirit of Life and Power without whose influence all your endeavours will be to no purpose, you have reason to expect help suited and adequate to all your difficulties.

III. By unnecessarily appearing in dangerous or improper situations.

It is one thing to be humble and condescending: it is another to render yourself common, cheap, and contemptible. The men of the world know when a Minister is out of his place—when they can oppress him by numbers or circumstances—when they can make him laugh, while his office frowns. Well will it be for him, if he is only rendered absurd in his future public admonitions, by his former compliances; well if, being found like St. Peter on dangerous ground, he is not seduced, virtually at least, to deny his Master.

IV. By suspicious appearances in his family.

As the head of your household you are responsible for its appearances. Its pride, sloth, and disorder will be yours. You are accountable for your wife's conduct, dress, and manners; as well as those of your children, whose education must be peculiarly exemplary. Your family is to be a picture of what you wish other families to be: and, without the most determined resolution, in reliance on God, to finish this picture, cost what it will, your recommending Family Religion to others will but create a smile. Your unfriendly hearers will recollect enough of Scripture to tell you that you ought, like the Primitive Bishop, to be *one, that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity: for if a*

man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?.

V. By meddling, beyond your sphere, in temporals.

Your aim and conversation, like your sacred call, are to be altogether heavenly. As *man of God*, you have no concern with politics and parties and schemes of interest, but you are to live above them. There is a sublime spirit in a devoted Minister, which as one says of Christianity itself, pays no more regard to these things than to the battles of rooks, the industry of ants, or the policy of bees.

VI. By venturing off general and acknowledged ground in spirituals.

By giving *strong meat*, instead of *milk*, to those who are yet but *babes*—by *giving heed to fables, which minister questions rather than godly edifying;* amusing the mind, but not affecting the heart; often disturbing and bewildering, seldom convincing; frequently raising a smile, never drawing a tear.

VII. By maintaining acknowledged truth in your own spirit.

Both food and medicines are injurious, if administered scalding hot. The spirit of a teacher often effects more than his matter. Benevolence is a universal language: and it will apologize for a multitude of defects, in the man who speaks it; while neither talents nor truth will apologize for pride, illiberality, or bitterness. Avoid, therefore, irritating occasions and persons, particularly disputes and disputants, by which a Minister often loses his temper and his character.

VIII. By being too sharp-sighted, too quick-eared, or too ready-tongued.

Some evils are irremediable: they are best neither seen nor heard: by seeing and hearing things which you cannot remove, you will create implacable adversaries; who, being guilty aggressors, never forgive.

Avoid SPEAKING meanly or harshly of any one: not only because this is forbidden to Christians, but because it is to declare war as by a thousand heralds.

IX. BY THE TEMPTATIONS ARISING FROM THE FEMALE SEX.

I need not mention what havoc Satan has made in the Church, by this means, from the Fall to this day. Your safety, when in danger from this quarter, lies in flight—to parley, is to fall. Take the first hint from conscience, or from friends.

In fine, *Watch thou in all things: endure afflictions: do the work of an evangelist: make full proof of thy ministry:* and then, whether those around you acknowledge your real character or not now, they shall one day *know that there hath been a prophet among them!*

FRAGMENT.

A DYING MINISTER'S FAREWELL!

WHEN a Christian Minister feels the springs of life giving away:—his faculties decaying—his voice failing—his spirits sinking—though he may not have it in his power to say, as the Apostle did to his friends, *I know that ye all, among whom I have preached the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more*—Yet he should stand ready to part from his flock, and every Sermon should be felt by him as if it were his last.

Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men: for I have not shunned to declare unto you ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD. And what have I declared that counsel of God to be?—All the curious distinctions of the schools?—All the peculiarities insisted on so strongly by different sects?—No such thing! I have followed the great Apostle in *testifying* REPENTANCE *toward God, and* FAITH *toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

There has been a slander brought against religion—that we are NOT AGREED, as to the truths we should set before men. I say, It is false! We ARE agreed. All, who know any thing of real religion, are agreed, that the SUBSTANCE of the matter is contained in REPENTANCE *toward God, and* FAITH *toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If a man, like the Prodigal, feels that he has left his father's house—turned his back on God—and is become a fool and a madman for so doing—and that there is no hope but in his returning again: if such a change of mind is wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, as he wrought in David, when he cried, *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin:* if, like Peter, he goes forth weeping bitterly—feeling that he has acted foolishly and wickedly, and that his only hope is in the mercy of God through the Saviour—then the man enters so far into the spirit of religion—REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD.

But does he rest in this? Nay, he knows that if he could offer *thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil*, he could make no satisfaction for *the sin of his soul.* He looks to the atonement!—to *Him, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

Repentance toward God must be accompanied by *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. These men are enabled to say with St. Paul, "*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.* I have no refuge but in him—no other hope—no other plea. All my confidence before God is grounded on this—that *He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*"

If a minister testifies these things—if he speaks

plainly and simply these grand essential truths of God's word—though he die before another Sabbath return, HE MAY REST IN PEACE—leaving the issue in God's hand.

The ground of a Minister's own solid satisfaction cannot be POPULARITY: for, even to Simon Magus *all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God!*—neither can he ground his satisfaction on the exercise of strong and enlarged TALENTS; for even Balaam was a man of extraordinary endowments—nor can it be on his SUCCESS: *For many*, saith our Lord, *shall come to me and say, Have we not done many wonderful works in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils? Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you!* As though he had said, "I deny not the works, but ye are evil men!"

But a Minister's satisfaction must be grounded on the faithful discharge of his office in THE DELIVERY OF HIS MESSAGE. A Prince sends a special messenger to his rebellious subjects, with offers of pardon: in examining his conduct, he will not inquire whether they received and approved him or not: the question will be—"Did you deliver my message? Did you deliver it as one that believed it yourself?—as one in EARNEST?" If a man should come and tell you, with a cheerful countenance and careless air, that your house was on fire, and that you and your children would be burnt in the flames if you did not make haste to escape, you would not believe him. You would say, "He does not believe it himself, or he would not be so unfeeling as to speak of it in such a manner."

If a minister delivers his message, then no scorn, no reproach that may be cast upon him, can take away his rest—he has done his duty. When the King sent out his servants to invite men to His feast, they excused themselves on various pretences:—but the servant might say, "No matter!—I have declared the message—I may rest in having done my part, though no success seems to attend my pressing invitations."

I would lodge, therefore, my appeal in your consciences—*I take* YOU *to record*—I appeal to conscience: for there is a conscience in man; and in serious moments it will speak out. It wrung from Joseph's brethren that confession, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother!* It forced Balaam himself to cry out, *Let me die the death of the righteous! and let my last end be like his!* It tormented the traitor Judas into that self-accusation, *I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!*

When a young person has been talked to by his parents—when they have represented to him the misery and ruin of a wicked course, and of bad habits—he might affect to brave it out at the time; but he has gone afterward weeping through the streets because CONSCIENCE WOULD SPEAK!

But when the spirit of God softens a man's heart—when he is made to FEEL *what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God*—then a faithful Minister's appeal to that man is like that of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe:* 1 Thess. ii, 10—13.

It is most affecting to see to what miserable shifts men will have recourse, in order to evade the truth.

"It is IRRATIONAL," says one, "to insist so much on certain peculiarities of doctrine!"—But whose reason shall be the judge?—*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness:* but, *it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*

"It is UNNECESSARY," says another—But has God commanded—and do we pronounce his commands unnecessary?

"It is DISREPUTABLE"—Did Christ regard reputation?—Nay, *he made himself of no reputation.*

"It is a NARROW way"—Ah! there, indeed, you pronounce truly! The way to heaven is a narrow way! But what says the Judge?—*Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

Oh how distressing is it, to observe many, to whom we cannot but fear, the Gospel which they hear preached from Sunday to Sunday, is but *the savour of death!* If God has made a difference in any of us, let us not forget to whom we are indebted.

Brethren! YOU are my witnesses. I take you to record, that you have had the whole counsel of God declared unto you—that all curious and metaphysical inquiries, all critical and conjectural points, have been carefully avoided for your sake. I have attempted to clear my ministry of all disputable subjects, in order to set before you the plain fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of Salvation through him.

But, consider! YOU also must give an account! I must give an account, whether I plainly and simply declared the truth, as one who felt its importance, and was in earnest. YOU must give an account, whether you have gone away from this place, as if you had heard nothing to the purpose, and immediately dissipated your thoughts with some trifling subject—some mere secular concern:—or—whether what you heard brought you to your knees before God, beseeching him to seal and impress his truth upon your hearts.

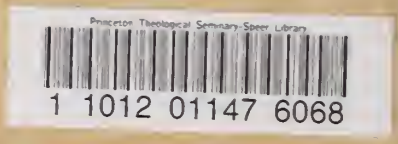
Oh consider the satisfaction you will find, in really embracing *all the counsel of God.* Consider how soon the time will come, in which it must be your

ONLY SATISFACTION, that you have embraced it! Let it be your prayer, as you go hence—"O God! give me grace to repent, with that repentance which is unto life! Make me serious! Teach me what I must do to be saved! Help me to believe the record which thou hast given of thy Son. Give me faith to receive the atonement—to set to my seal, that *there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*, but the name of Jesus Christ."

Come to your Saviour with HUMILITY as a sinner: come with GRATITUDE and LOVE. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words:* when, *so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto Mount Sion; and unto the city of the Living God—the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; and to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the New Covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. See, then, that ye refuse not him that speaketh!—but—receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us hold fast grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.*[*]

[*] Heb. xii, 18—28.

THE END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